The MYSTERY of the MISSING EYEBROWS

"The Newspaper Boys' Series"

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Renfro's hand trembled so that he could hardly pull the knife from his trousers pocket. It was followed by a note book from which he tore two sheets of paper. Quickly he opened one blade, the thinnest of the three in his knife, warmed it with several breaths, then slipped it under one of the frozen eyebrows on the window pane.

THE MYSTERY
OF THE
MISSING EYEBROWS

By STEPHEN RUDD

The Newpaper Boys' Series

Illustrated

Published by the
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A WORD TO ALL NEWSPAPER BOYS

This volume, the "MYSTERY OF THE MISSING EYEBROWS," is the first of twelve books written about newspaper boys by an old newspaper boy, and the picture of Renfro Horn is the likeness of a flesh and blood newspaper carrier, the real Renfro Horn, who inspired these twelve books, that the newspaper boys of these United States might understand the responsibility they bear to the world.

The newspaper that you take each night to your subscriber's door plays a great part in the life of each subscriber. Thru rain and snow and cold you go, and if you are a good carrier, as all newspaper boys should be, you will overcome all problems to have your paper there at the exact time each day, as early as you can get there, regardless of weather, unmindful of play, striving all the time to be first to deliver papers in your territory.

And if you are to succeed later in life, you will constantly strive to make route gains for your newspaper. A new subscriber each week, a gain of only one new subscription each week, if you do it regularly, will mean that you are a good carrier, as good as Renfro Horn and Renfro is one of the best, for he carried papers on a route for the writer of this book who is a circulation manager.

When your subscribers quit, make them give you a good reason. And collect your bills. When folks do not pay, tell them about the six or seven times you come to their door each week, and ask them if they can do you just the one favor, and remind them you bring the biggest value in the world for the money, the news of the whole world, plus your good service.

Newspaper boys are becoming the great men of the world. We have one of them as president of these United States. Others are in high places. The newspaper training is valuable, as much so as school, but you must look about you and make mental notes and you must be a go-getter like Renfro Horn. And here he is. Read about this newest and greatest Boy hero, who is just a carrier of newspapers like yourself. And when you know him as well as we do, you will like him quite as well, and you will want to follow his many adventures in the other books to come.

By The Author

Stephen Rudd

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THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING EYEBROWS.

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTEROUS HOUSE.

RENFRO Horn was quite sure that Captain Pete would never have spoken had he not dropped the rabbit. But the sound of its frozen body striking the hard crust on the top of the snow made the old man turn around to discover the reason for the sound. And at the same time he saw the rabbit he saw Renfro.

"Oh," he snarled, "Spyin' on me ag'in—sneakin' on an old man's own grounds."

The jerking of his shoulders broke the string which held the other rabbits to his shoulder. A rattle like falling twigs. They were all on the top of the snow. With a rush the old man was down on all fours trying to roll them together.

Renfro stepped up to help him. And then he saw the three quails and stopped. One minute

he stared at them: the next he stooped and fumbled with the tops of his shoes.

When he looked down at the ground again the quails were gone, and the rabbits in a close heap. Renfro knew what was under the pile, but he pretended not to have seen them. He remembered the notices the game marshal had had posted about quail hunting the week before.

Imprisonment and fine for the first offense. Captain Pete had one of these notices on his own big front gate.

"Pretty good luck?" Renfro twisted at the top button on his mackinaw. "Fourteen rabbits I should guess."

"Twenty-two," Captain Pete was proud of his good fortune. "And all shot in my own fields. You can go on, buddy. I'll tote them down to my shack myself."

"Down to the shack?"

Renfro asked the question. Captain Pete answered it. "Yes, I'm a stayin' down there this winter. An old man like me can't chop wood enough to keep the big house warm. I didn't even try to. Moved down to the shack in September."

With a last look at the pile of frozen rabbits Renfro walked slowly away down toward the road which led back to town. The three quails and the threatened fine were instantly forgotten. But a big question was in his mind.

If Captain Pete had been living in the shack ever since September, then who had been living in the big house? Four times recently, when he had been out on late walks like this one, he had seen queer lights spring from its windows.

They didn't stay in one place but seemed to flash from one room to another. The last time they had been in the right hand room in the upper story and then suddenly had gone out and flashed in the lower hand corner. He had thought it queer then, but had regarded them as certain proofs of Captain Pete's queer mind.

Where the two paths, the short cut and the longer way round intersected, Renfro paused uncertainly. The short one meant a saving of at least a quarter of an hour and he would be on time for supper. The longer one would make him late and bring upon his head the reproofs of both his mother and father.

Yet he wouldn't know about the lights if he

chose the short cut. And he had to know about them tonight. Better risk his family's wrath than miss a chance to solve this mystery.

And Renfro hurried down the long path which led past the big white house.

Just after he was out on the road he met Clint Moore, the boy who sold chestnuts on the Horns' home street in the early fall. "Who's living in the old Hall house?" Renfro asked him.

Clint whistled, "Just old dippy Captain Pete Hall," he laughed. "An he's worse off his nut than ever this winter. Don't have no fire nor nothin'. We'd think he was dead if we didn't see his lights of nights once in a while and see him agoin' huntin' past the house."

Renfro stared at him. The dusk was beginning to get heavy, but he could still see Clint's eyes and he knew he was telling the truth. He started to ask him another question when Clint said, "I'm going your way so we might just as well walk along together if you don't mind. There's a basket ball game in town tonight and I'm going to go and stay at my aunt's."

He talked on about the ball game but Renfro

wasn't listening. He was staring at the big Hall house which was less than a quarter of a mile ahead of them. It set back off the road another quarter of a mile and in front of it was a long row of pine trees.

They almost shut off all view of the old white shell whose original owners had claimed that it was "a palace with fourteen rooms." But in the upper right hand corner of it a light was plainly visible to both boys and—

"There's the old fellow now." Clint pointed at the small window, thru the ragged blind of which were gleams of light. "Don't see it often but some times—"

And then the light suddenly went out.

Renfro was silent. Captain Pete with his twenty-two rabbits and three quails was back in the woods. He was sure of that. But who could have had that light? And did Captain Pete really live in the shack now or had that been merely a story he had told to take Renfro's attention away from the quails?

Renfro was still wondering about that when they reached the end of the car line and boarded the car which took them past his home. Clint

would have to transfer at Liberty Avenue.

They were the only passengers on the car until three paper carriers with their big bulky paper bags got on a few blocks farther up the line. When each had finished carrying his own route he had waited for the others. Riding in together gave them a chance to talk over profits, new subscribers and the adventures they encountered on their routes.

Renfro tried to listen to them and to Clint at the same time. His questions about Captain Pete had reminded Clint of an old hired man they had once had. He had known Captain Pete Hall before he got to be so queer. There had been a brother who had been wild to get rich. He and some confederates from another city had made counterfeit money in the little shack on the Hall place.

"Captain Pete found their outfit but he didn't know his brother was one of the counterfeiters so he went to the sheriff about it and the whole gang was arrested. His brother got the stiffest sentence of the whole lot.

"He hated Captain Pete then," Clint went on with his story. "He said that when he got

out he was goin' to kill him. Worryin' about that upset Pete's mind."

When Renfro asked him about the time at which the brother was to be free again Clint shook his head. The hired man had never told him anything about the length of the sentence Pete's brother had gotten. He had told all of the story he knew. His mother had once said that Captain Pete's brother was dead. "Better off that way than the way Pete is," he laughed.

When he got off at the corner several other passengers entered the car. Renfro studied them—the man with the beetling eyebrows and weak mouth, the woman with the near seal coat and the genuine diamonds. There was something queer about them. The papers recently told the story of a jewelshop theft. Renfro began to wonder.

The carrier boys jostled against him as they went to leave the car. The little one was bragging about a ride he had taken on the patrol wagon the night before. There had been some trouble in the street on which his route lay and the corner police had taken him along to

help give directions about the location of some houses.

And then Renfro's own street was called. With an effort he left the interesting couple, the lively wide awake carrier boys, and the two men in uniform. His own avenue lay before him, placid and uninteresting. The bright street lights made every corner on it as visible as if it were in the day time.

He ran up the great stone steps to his own home. He opened the door, entered the hall and knew he was late for supper. With a dash he was up stairs and to the bath room to wash his face and hands.

And downstairs in the dining room his parents were discussing him. His father, tall and thin and patrician looking, adjusted his horn rimmed spectacles and said once more that he knew his son was queer. Otherwise why would he walk alone as he did? If he didn't go out to some queer spot he walked around the home yard. Why, once he had counted one hundred trips Renfro had made around the house, his head down and his feet moving at a fairly rapid pace.

Other thirteen year old boys were playing ball or visiting in the drug stores. It was uncanny—this way he had of walking alone.

Mrs. Horn, also tall and thin and socially graceful, rustled her stiff silk dress and frowned. She too, thought Renfro was queer. But she was sure it was all due to the detective stories he read continually. Mary had told her that morning of seeing a light under his door at about three o'clock one night, at half past one on another, and when she had slipped down there had found that he was reading.

"They are about horrible crimes," she shuddered. "It worries me so that I cannot sleep. I am afraid he will cultivate criminal tendencies. What he reads will influence him, I'm sure. Now I read of a boy—"

Mr. Horn shook his head. "Nonsense," he said shortly. "There's no criminals in our families. Renfro is a little queer. None of us boys was the least bit like him. But he's clever with all his queer streaks. Why in that continued story—that detective one he coaxed me to read, he had the mystery all solved before the last chapter was published."

Well, Mrs. Horn was determined of one thing. If Renfro had to read such queer stories he should not do it in the middle of the night. "I'll change his room," she said with emphasis. "There is that old music room right across from—"

"From mine," Renfro finished in the door way. "And I'd like to have it for my own library," he added and walked to the table.

His unsatisfactory explanation of his walk half angered his father. But he did not know what to say about it. The report card Renfro had brought home a few days before had been almost perfect. He couldn't command him to hurry from school to study. He was just ready to mention some errand he had at his office when Mrs. Horn spoke.

"Renfro," her voice was fretful and accusing. "I needed you this afternoon to go out to Captain Pete Hall's for me. It's rabbit season now and I wanted some for dinner tomorrow. I waited over an hour for you and then I drove out there by myself."

She shivered. "It's an uncanny place—that big house is. The shrubbery has grown every-

where and the weatherboards and shutters which have dropped off the house lay just where they have fallen. It was like working my way thru a maze to get to the door. And what made it worse it was just getting dark and—"

"And Captain Pete wasn't home," Renfro finished for her remembering again the three quails, the rabbits and the shack story the old man had told back in the woods.

Mrs. Horn gave him a severe look. She allowed no one to interrupt her without giving them a reproof.

"Yes, he was," she snapped back, "but he didn't have any rabbits for sale. What was worse he said he wouldn't have any at all. He mumbled something about not going to hunt this season and shut the door in my face."

With a gasp Renfro half rose from his chair, stared at his mother, heard his father's gruff command to behave himself, and settled back in his seat again, smoothing out his napkin with a great effort. But his eyes remained round and his mouth opened and closed several times before he spoke.

CHAPTER II.

RENFRO WANTS A NEWSPAPER ROUTE.

WHEN Renfro did manage to speak he asked his mother another question. "What time was that, mother?"

Mrs. Horn studied a minute. The question annoyed her but she was too well bred not to answer it. "Oh, about five, I should imagine. I waited until four thirty for you before I left the house, and I was back at half past five. Why do you ask, Renfro?"

Instead of answering her, Renfro asked another question. "Are you sure it was Captain Pete, mother? You know he is old now and changed and—" he hesitated and finished lamely, "It might have been some one else."

His mother's high bred voice was impatient. She wanted to dismiss the subject and discuss finances with her husband, showing him her need for a larger allowance. "Of course, I am sure it was Captain Pete. Haven't I bought turkeys of him for five seasons? Of course, he looks old now. He looked that way the first time I saw him. And, Renfro, please be still

and let your father and me talk about something much more important.''

The steel like edge to her words clipped off any further questions Renfro wanted to ask. But tho he couldn't ask them out loud they surged back and forth in his mind while he ate. Could he have been mistaken about the time he saw Captain Pete in the woods? Had it taken him and Clint a longer time to walk to the car line than it did him when he was alone?

And if it did, then why was Captain Pete unwilling to sell any of the twenty-two rabbits?

Now there had been the three quails. Renfro was sure that Captain Pete saw him staring at them. Could he have recognized Mrs. Horn and been afraid that Renfro might tell her about the quails? A denial of having hunted might throw them off the track should they feel it their duty to report to the game warden what Renfro had seen.

But Renfro smiled at his own last conclusion. Captain Pete Hall was too wise a man to believe that. Also he was too greedy to miss the chance of selling any of his game.

But Renfro's thoughts were diverted from the old hunter and the inhabitant of the big old house by his father who directed a question to him. The discussion with his wife over finances reminded Mr. Horn that his son too had an allowance. "Keeping your book so that it balances this month?" he clipped out his words, "And did you save anything last?"

"Yes sir," Renfro smiled. "I saved half of my allowance last month. I want to buy—"

"Some new detective stories." Mr. Horn laughed and turned the conversation back to his wife again.

Renfro felt as if he could not stand it a minute longer. With a low apology he rose from the table and then they noticed him. "Renfro," his mother spoke sharply, "You are not to go out of the house tonight—not even to walk around the yard."

His father curtly repeated her command. And with sinking heart Renfro left the room, wandered thru the library and dragged his feet up the stair way to his own room. It was only half past seven o'clock. And he did not want to read.

He walked to the window and opened it. The cold air sharpened his brain. He looked over to the south. Yes, that was the right direction. Just three miles from the court house tower was Captain Pete's tumbling ancestral mansion and the little shack in which Renfro and the old man, before he had gotten so grouchy, had once roasted potatoes and meat.

"I'm sure it was Captain Pete and I'm sure it was about five o'clock when I saw him. Now mother must have been mistaken—" he began to think and then stopped.

Slowly he closed the window. "Mother," he spoke out loud deliberately, "saw some one else. Pete has rented that big house or been scared out of it, or some one who knows how secluded a life Pete lives, has discovered that he is down in the shack for the winter and is making the big house his headquarters."

His hands went deep into his pockets. His mind began to make definite plans for ways and means to solve the mystery of the stranger whom he was sure his mother had seen. He himself would watch the house and also the shack. There was still the possibility that Cap-

tain Pete might have hurried home and he, Renfro, might have mistaken the time a few minutes.

In that case there was something mysterious about the shack and Captain Pete did not want him to make any more trips or visits there, giving as an excuse that it was his new home. "But I'm going out there tomorrow afternoon," he began, "and every other afternoon and evening I can, only first I'll have to find an excuse which will satisfy the folks."

For half an hour he worked framing excuses for those trips. And then Mary, the second maid, brought one directly to his room. Mary was a woman with imagination and romance, she said, tho in her form she was fat and homely and of Scotch descent. Cautiously she tapped at Renfro's door.

"Here's the Evening Globe, Mr. Renfro," she whispered, thrusting the folded paper into his hand. "Right on the front page there's more about that big jewel robbery. Them hired detectives don't seem to get nowhere with their clues and I thought mebbe me, with my imagination, and you so clever in workin' out mys-

teries, we could beat them once. It would show—"

But Renfro didn't hear the rest of her hopes. The paper clasped in his hand became the master key to the mysterious house. It had reminded him of the carrier boys, who had ridden home on the car with him.

They knew their routes like he did his school books. He would buy a route—this particular suburban route which lay closest to the old Hall home. None of his trips past it would arouse suspicion then.

He clapped his hands. He would ask his father's permission the first thing in the morning. Experience had taught him that it was no time to make requests directly after an argument between his father and mother. But his father's ill humor didn't last long. By morning he would be his dignified, businesslike and his exceedingly fair self again.

Renfro was right in that surmise. Smiling, almost affable, his father offered his son half of the morning paper when he entered the dining room for breakfast. But Renfro shook his head. "I want to talk about a job, Dad," he

said. "I want your permission to buy a paper route, one of the Evening Globe's."

His mother answered his request. Such an unheard of thing was out of the question. None of the boys on their street, none of the sons of the people in their set, ever thought of such undignified proceedings. And she would not allow her son to do it either.

"Well," his father's eyes twinkled, "Don't pay too much for it. Buy a cheap one and see how well it wears."

A direct look at his wife quieted her on the subject. After Renfro had left the room he explained his stand. "The only way to stop that kid," he shook his head, "is to let him have enough of anything. I'll see he gets enough of that paper carrier business right in the start. I'll stop on my way down and see the circulation manager of The Globe. I'll tell him to give Renfro the toughest proposition of a route he has. A week from now our worries will be over."

In the circulation manager's office an hour later he explained his errand. "His mother doesn't want him to carry a route," said Mr.

Horn. He couldn't tell his own stand to this shrewd business like young fellow, "and I promised her I'd see he didn't carry one long," he added. "Give the boy the first one you have which is a tough deal. And rough it up on him all you can."

"Mr. Horn," George Bruce looked directly into the older man's eyes, "we have some routes which don't need the least bit of roughing up to make them tough propositions for men like me and even you. One is vacant right now. The business manager wants me to drop that route, and I've almost decided to do so since it has long been a dead loss on our hands."

He thumped his fist on the table. "I'm going to put your son out there, and because I still believe that that route can be made into a paying proposition I'm going to expect him to make good. I'm doing what you ask me to do —am I not?"

"And," he continued after Mr. Horn had given him a hesitant nod, "If he fails you will have your wish; if he succeeds I'm going to have mine."

He didn't speak again until Mr. Horn was

out of the room and then he swung around in his swivel chair and faced his alert stenographer. "Miss Newell," he said, and there was a gleam of interest in his keen blue eyes, "I'm anxious to see that boy. Mr. Horn's a king of finance. Mrs. Horn is a society queen. The young prince—well, let's see how he wears the family coronets."

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGE MAN AT A WINDOW.

LATE that afternoon, at four o'clock to be exact, Renfro Horn entered the circulation manager's office. Behind him lay a line of offices thru which he had passed, and a line of men with whom he had argued and urged his way to this seeming potentate of The Globe.

"Mr. Bruce doesn't see applicants for routes" he had been told exactly seven times.

But now he was in Mr. Bruce's office and looking directly at that man, who was dictating a letter to Miss Newell, his stenographer. Renfro with his hat in his hand stared around the big room, as simply and well furnished as his own father's private office. He liked the pictures on the walls—some of which were the originals from which the Globe's daily cartoons had been made and others, photographs of men famous in the newspaper world, who had started their careers as route carriers.

Renfro was studying a photograph of a full faced man with a high forehead when Mr.

Bruce finished his letter and looked at him. And he liked him immediately for the boyish way he had of smiling, the cordial gleam in his eyes and the sincere tone of his voice while he had dictated.

"I'm Renfro Horn," he said, "and I want to buy a route if there is one vacant."

Mr. Bruce started. "Oh, yes," he narrowed his eyes and Renfro realized that he felt those same shrewd eyes grasping for his past, his present and future ability all at once. "Any particular part of town, son?"

"Yes sir, out south whenever there's a vacancy, Mr.—"

"Bruce" finished the other.

"I would like to have the Washington Avenue route—the one farthest out." Renfro finished.

"Who told you it was vacant?"

Renfro's eyes flashed. "Is it right now?" he asked and added, "I was afraid I would have to wait a while for it."

"Some fellow has been stringing him on that route." George Bruce thought immediately. Out loud he began, "Now, son—"

Then he remembered the promise he had made Renfro's father. This was a worse route even than the one he had in mind when he had talked to Mr. Horn that morning. It was a dead loss. Pride alone kept George Bruce from stopping that route. The Globe's rival paper claimed that they made money on their paper in that part of town, and until he had discredited that claim George Bruce was determined to keep that route alive.

Yet only that morning Andy Andrews had announced that after today he would make no more trips on that route. Here before him was his salvation. Mr. Horn had wanted his boy to make a failure. All day whenever George Bruce remembered the interview that morning he had hoped the boy would succeed. Now after he had seen Renfro he wanted him more than ever to succeed. "And he hasn't a chance there," he admitted to himself.

"You won't make much money out there at first, son," he talked slowly. "In fact the boy who has been out there has lost so much that he gave up the route this morning."

"I can build it up," Renfro's eyes held en-

treaty.

George Bruce nodded. "Slowly," he returned.

"Do I get it?"

Robert Bruce looked up and down Renfro's sturdy body, at his determined dark blue eyes, at his boyish stern mouth. "Yes," he answered, "and if you make good out there you can have your choice of any route in town." He turned to Miss Newell. "Call Morrison, please."

He was still studying Renfro when Morrison, the route manager, for the south side of Lindendale entered the office. "This is Renfro Horn, Morrison," he told the younger man. "He is to have Old Grief route. Andrews gave it up this morning.

"Yes sir, he was telling me so," Morrison looked keenly at Renfro. "He's waiting now to take some other boy out to teach him the route. Shall I take him?" he nodded at Renfro.

"Renfro Horn" the circulation manager supplied the missing name. "Yes, do, please."

In the outer office Renfro asked permission to telephone his father. "I don't want them to worry if I'm late" he explained.

"Oh, you'll be late all right." Morrison laughed easily. "Andy'll tell you about that."

When Renfro came back from the telephone Morrison had completed his survey of him. "You've got good legs, Horn," he admitted. "and can walk that route. It's all over everywhere. Now get good ears, listen to what Andy tells you tonight and I tell you later. We've got lots of tough customers out there, and I want you to watch them, See?"

"And say," he went on before Renfro could answer, "I don't like your name. It sounds too much like a map name. Get something human to use for a carrier name. Ever have a nickname?

Another question without an answer—all due to the speed with which he talked. "I'll give you a good one—Hooch, if you please—Hooch Horn. Sounds good—doesn't it? It has a business like twang to it. So I'll just let it go."

He hurried "Hooch" out to the hall in which Andy was waiting. He introduced the two boys, gave them car fare to the station at which their papers were delivered and hurried them away. "I'm giving you the east route you

asked for, Andy," he said, "but it will cost you something rather high. Old Grief is the only route the Globe has to give away."

Andy chatted all the way out to the station. A steady stream of questions followed his description of what he termed "the poorest paying and hardest route in the city."

Who had wished Old Grief on Renfro? How had Morrison gotten hold of him? Would he ask for another route as he went broke on Old Grief? And finally how much experience had he had with route work?

Renfro, recently christened "Hooch," evaded all direct answers. It was almost dusk when they reached the station. He helped Andy tear open the two packages of papers waiting for them there, stuff them into the paper bag and carry them down the street.

"We'll throw them tonight," Andy was a virtual dictator this last trip of his. "But when it's windy or rainy you want to be sure to get them on the porch. Nobody wants to come out here to run down complaints."

"There's the worst dead beat in town, Hooch," he pointed toward a shot gun house far

back in a narrow yard. "He'll try to get you—does every new boy. Turn him down. He owes me $1.65."

They turned the corner and Andy pointed down the street, "Out there—" his finger went out directly in a line with his face—"there in that big old house lives the queerest man in the country. No, not in the house" he corrected himself, "It's too rummy a shell for anybody to live in. But in a cabin out there. I went out last night and bought six rabbits and every one of 'em was shot clean thru the head—the prettiest shots I ever saw. Go out some time."

"Was he in the shack you say?"

"Yep," Andy rolled the paper for the next customer, "I went to the door but I didn't get in. It looked interesting but he shut the door while he hunted out my rabbits. Queer old bird!"

Renfro wished that their route took them out to the white house so that he could see whether or not there was a light there tonight. In the library at noon he had walked past the case of old coins and was reminded of the counterfeiting story Clint had told him.

If Captain Pete's brother had returned he might be making that sort of coin again. But his thoughts were cut short by an exclamation from Andy. A heavy set old man leading a dog by a heavy strap, had jostled into them. The dog barked sharply and tugged at the strap, but the man quieted him without a jerk or command—just a simple Scotch name muttered in a tone rich with a Scotch accent "Lang Tammy."

And the dog had followed him obediently.

"That old Bird's a new inhabitant out here," Andy stared after the pair. "Suppose he'll be wanting to start the paper, Hooch. Look out for him, and get his money first. Remember what they say about the perils of parting a Scotchman and his money."

Renfro tried to watch the old man with occasional glances over his shoulder but Andy raced him along. The old man had not turned off the long street when he disappeared in the dusk.

"I don't believe I'll remember all these places." Renfro ventured to remark.

"Then forget the ones who owe accounts."

Andy laughed facetiously and hurried still more. "This is a case where I'm not prolonging any fond farewells," he ended slyly. "Will you, Hooch, when you leave?"

"Oh, I'll stay," retorted Renfro and again Andy laughed.

Renfro thought of that laugh the next afternoon as he passed along the route. And it was a long, slow trip. He had remembered very few houses at which Andy had left the Evening Globe. After trying to make out landmarks which he remembered from the night before and failing to do so Renfro had adopted his own way of locating customers.

When in doubt he merely went to the front door and asked their names and what paper they took.

The street lights were on when he reached Wayne Street—the street Andy had termed the aristocratic portion of his route. "Everybody takes the paper here and everybody pays for it," he had given the information proudly, "Even to Judge Wier, the old duffer."

"Paying promptly is his policy," Andy tried to be witty. "The fellows he sentences in court

can tell you that, and he gives generous tips besides payment in full."

At the corner Renfro slipped off his gloves and blew on his fingers to warm them. The wind was losing its volume, but the temperature was dropping. The ice in the gutter had a hard, unmelting look. Little flurries of snow played around the light globe like myriads of tiny bugs in summer.

"I'll fold my papers at the drug store tomorrow evening," Renfro growled. Andy might have told him that. He might have been a little more definite, too, in showing him the route.

A big, wooly dog brushed past him and ran down the street. "Lang Tammy" Renfro remembered the name the Scotchman had used the afternoon before, "I wonder if that could be he. He was just about that size. He—"

And then he stopped abruptly in the middle of the block. Directly across the street from him was Judge Wier's old fashioned brick house. The front room was dark, but the room back of it was lighted and the window blind raised more than half way.

The light coming from it struck the shrubbery

and showed a dark figure lurking there. The house next door was dark. Walking slowly on so as not to arouse the lurking figure's suspicion, Renfro watched him stealthily.

Suddenly the light in the room was dimmed, and the front room became brilliantly lighted. At the same minute the lurking figure slouched out of the shrubbery, close to the window with the raised blind and stood there quietly staring into the room for a few minutes. And then he slouched back into the shrubbery again.

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW DOG AT THE OLD HOUSE.

FOR a few minutes Renfro Horn stood irresolute. Then he darted back down the street a short distance, crossed it, slipped along the sidewalk until forty feet from the shrubbery, dropped onto his hands and knees and crawled to the spot where the peeper had disappeared. The mysterious man had vanished.

A hurried but close search failed to reveal where he had gone. Renfro did not knock at the door. He had no proof to offer that the man had been at the window. Telling such a story as that to Judge Wier, reputed to be the town's most courageous citizen, would win him a laugh.

As soon as he had finished the street and incidentally his route, Renfro walked back to Washington Avenue and down it toward the Hall house. It was dark but his parents would not be worried if he were quite late in getting home. They had predicted all sorts of difficulties for this evening.

After a little while Renfro slowed down his pace. The big white house, the cabin a little far-

ther on, Captain Pete and the stranger were only a short distance away and he had as yet made no reason for coming to their premises at night. A request for rabbits? He shook his head.

"I won't go in. I'll just peek," Renfro vowed to himself. "At least that will give me a beginning for a cue."

Directly opposite the three big apple trees which remained of the Hall orchard, a big airedale came sniffing toward him. Renfro stopped, gave him a keen look and called softly, "Lang Tammy—here sir—Lang Tammy!"

The big dog sniffed his way to Renfro. After reaching him he gave a few more investigating sniffs and then seized Andy's discarded paper bag playfully in his teeth. He tugged at it with all his might. Laughing Renfro tugged back.

"You're a peach of a dog, Lang Tammy," he began, "I'd like—"

Then the strange voice did more than had the strange appearance. It frightened the big dog. Turning sharply he ran back to the apple trees. He wheeled around, gave Renfro a look, a sharp bark, and trotted into the shrubbery out of sight.

Lang Tammy was a new possession on the

Hall place. Captain Pete had not had a dog since his collie had been poisoned a year ago. Renfro chuckled, "I'll see him and ask him where he got his new dog" he decided, "That will help some. He'll either have to claim or deny the dog. And I know positively that Lang Tammy's master is somewhere on this place."

He turned off the road, skirted along a rail fence, jumped across a ditch and stumbled against a rotting stump. Every window in the big house was dark. He was making his way down to the cabin. The one opening there was on the other side of the house and Renfro couldn't be sure whether or not it was lighted till he came opposite the cabin.

He scratched both of his hands on some briers. His paper bag—Andy's discarded one to be exact,—caught on a paling on the second fence and tore loose with a ripping sound. The wind rattled the limbs on the old trees and made queer spectral sounds on the tin roof of the big house directly opposite the cabin.

Renfro looked sharply at it again. It was still dark. And then he stumbled against the cabin, felt his way around it and stood close to

the window.

Inside there was a small lamp burning. The chimney was smoke stained and the wick, turned low, made still more smoke. But the light showed the rude furniture of the room, the meal almost ready on the table.

Yet no one was in the cabin.

Up at the big house it was all dark. Captain Pete couldn't be there. Renfro shouldered his torn bag and made his way back to the road. It was interesting here and he wanted to lurk a little longer, but he knew that if he were too late in getting home his mother would be uneasy.

"If she worries too much Dad will make me give up the route," he thought.

After which he hurried up the road to the side walk. The houses on either side of the street were little and in the darkness stood sagging like the skin of a moldy apple. Some of them were lighted; others were dark. Andy had said the night before that only about half of them were tenanted.

But in them were probable subscribers for the Globe. Just as Renfro had about decided to

canvas here the next Saturday, the street car slowed to let off a passenger. At the same time Renfro swung on to ride back to the end of the line and help change the trolley.

And there sitting opposite him was Old Captain Pete clad in his best overcoat and hat. A genial smile spread over his face at the sight of Renfro. "Such rabbit luck," he ejaculated, "as I've had today! Killed thirty-one and sold 'em every one afore I left Main Street. Your hired gal bought two."

When he expressed surprise about Renfro's being on the car so late the carrier showed him his empty paper bag. "I'm coming out to get you for a new subscriber," he promised.

Like a battered sail Captain Pete's head shook a denial. "I ain't got no use for newspapers," he was gruff, "Haint read one regular for more than twenty years."

"Not since his brother was sent up," Renfro remembered the story Clint had told him.

Still remembering it he rode into his home avenue. And from the corner he walked home.

Mr. and Mrs. Horn were still in the dining room, Mr. Horn was looking thru the afternoon

papers and his wife was toying with some salted almonds. She rang the bell when Renfro entered, and Mary brought in his supper.

Her broad face spread into a grin when she saw Renfro. "Rabbit for supper," she whispered sibilantly, "I bought it this afternoon of Captain Pete Hall myself. Your maw was gone but I took it upon myself to do it. It's broiled too."

"See Captain Pete, Mary? he asked while he ate. "Dolled up, wasn't he?"

Mary nodded and simpered. "But his buttons was off something fierce, Renny," she declared. "A man like him has no business growing up to be a bachelor."

Mr. Horn looked over the top of his paper, first at Renfro and then at Mary. It wasn't exactly a look of reproof he gave them but rather of surprise. However, it was enough to stop their conversation.

"Get frightened alone?" Mrs. Horn's voice was full of hope.

Renfro shook his head. He honestly had not. His interest had been aroused however. He must talk to Mary alone about Captain Pete

and the rabbits. He must—

And then his father reached him an envelope. "This was in the mail," he told him, "postmarked The Evening Globe. I suppose it's your contract."

Together he and his wife arose and went into the library. Renfro tore open the blue envelope, pulled out a card and read it thru before he fairly understood it. Going back to the beginning he read it again.

"A full gown turkey to every route carrier who gets ten new subscribers before Thanksgiving Eve", he drawled. "Well, it's up to me to get some turkeys". he mused.

He ate bananas without any cream to save time and slipped into the kitchen. The cook was out and Mary was reading a novel and washing the dishes at the same time. Renfro's entrance startled her so that she let the soap drop into the water and the shower which rose from the pan, following the splash, went directly into both her own and Renfro's faces. They sputtered and gurgled.

Finally, Renfro could speak, "Mary," he began, "do you think you could cook six turkeys

all at once?"

Mary stared at him, "Six turkeys," she exclaimed. "Who are you wanting me to cook for, Renny? Six turkeys, no, I'll not be cooking turkeys for all your fine friends! Now in this book here where I was reading, there is a story about a turkey and a couple what lived on opposite farms from where it was raised. It was real romantic. The turkey got lost as turkeys will, and when the girl went to hunt it she found the young man and they fell in love and were married. It's just full of mystery and romance."

"Well," Renfro laughed, "none of my turkeys are going to get anyone in bad like that, Mary. Sure you'll cook them—won't you?"

"Where's the turkeys?" Mary was suspicious.

"Oh," Renfro smiled a look of mystery in his smile which brought Mary to her feet. "I'll have them here all right in time for Thanksgiving day."

"And, Mary," he slipped close to her and gave her a comradly look, "There's something on my mind I have to work out. I may need

you to help me. I'm not telling exactly what it is yet, but it's got mystery and maybe some romance in it. And you will help if I need you—won't you?"

Both of Mary's hands came out of the pan of suds. "Mister Renfro," she said solemnly, "Aint I been wantin' to give up this sort of work and go into real detective work for years. Why, once I took a correspondence school course in it. And I'll—"

Renfro's hand was raised in warning, "Just wait, Mary," he cautioned, "Just wait until I'm ready to tell you, and then you'll have your chance."

He sauntered back into the dining room. The telephone on the stand made him decide to call Andy and tell him that he hadn't missed a single customer, that he liked the route and would stick. He wanted to know, too, if Andy was satisfied with his new route.

And Renfro took down the receiver.

CHARPTER V.

THE STRANGER COMES AGAIN.

IT became still colder during that night. Renfro Horn awoke near midnight to feel a gale blowing around his ears. He got up, shut his east window and crawled back into bed. "I'll bet that tin roof is dancing a regular ghost dance on the big house." he muttered.

He turned over, pulled the blankets closer over his ears. The next minute it was morning, and Mary was calling him. "The pipe's froze something fierce," she began, "And you'll have to eat in the kitchen close to the range."

"Suits me all right," Renfro laughed and jumped out of bed.

At the breakfast table his mother began to worry about his route. She predicted that he would freeze his feet, and perhaps his hands, contract pneumonia and lumbago and then her list gave out. His father looked a trifle uneasy while she talked but said nothing.

However, as he and Renfro walked down the street together, respectively toward school and office, he gave his son some warnings. "Better

mind them all too, young man," he seemed very impatient this morning, "if you should happen to get sick, bang goes your paper route and no argument."

A shrill yell drew their attention across the street. Two morning paper carriers, who went to the Grant School, the same one Renfro attended, were coming in from finishing their delivery. Their paper bags were drawn around their shoulders, and their caps pulled low over their ears.

"Jim froze his right ear almost," sang the taller boy, "and I gave him first aid. One more merit badge."

"You bet," Jim agreed, "If you need any help tonight call on Bob, Hooch,"

"Hooch?" Mr. Horn was amazed.

"Oh, that's my nickname," Renfro affected carelessness. This was no time he reflected to tell how it had been created, nor how popular it had become in less than forty-eight hours. So he tried to change the subject. "Jim Noel's a first class Boy Scout and he's trying to win enough merit badges to get the eagle rank at the Court of Honor session."

Mr. Horn nodded, "That's all right for the other fellows," he said, "but if you freeze your ears you go to a doctor."

At that instant Renfro wished he could tell his father— a few things—how he had had not only his ears but his nose nipped during one of his hikes on which he was trying to make some discoveries concerning quail tracks. He himself had bound the snow onto them. And Mary had helped him with the other applications the first aid book advised.

But he kept still.

The weather grew milder during the day. At noon the ice along the curbing near the Grant School was melting a little, but when four o'clock came it had frozen again. Renfro and Jim Noel, hurrying along together discussed a hike and rabbit hunt for Saturday if it stayed cold. But just as they had their arrangements about finished, Renfro remembered the turkey contest.

"Say, Jim," he broke in suddenly, "I bet a turkey that if I can get off my route work to go I'll track down more rabbits than you do."

Jim stared at him. "Great guns!" he ejacu-

lated, "A turkey? How come?"

He stared again when he read the card Renfro showed him. "You'll never get sixty subscribers on Old Grief, Hooch," he declared. "Not unless you pay for their subscriptions yourself. Abie Lubin had it for a while and he didn't make anything, so that's sure proof it's no good."

But Renfro only whistled. He and Jim separated at the next corner. Beyond the edge of the big business districts and thru the residential part of town to his route Renfro hurried. His papers were at the station. He swung the bag on his back, wagered to himself that it would be heavier next week, and started on his route.

He stopped at the most promising houses and asked for new subscriptions. One woman threatened to have him arrested. Another told him that the last boy had been crooked and failed to mark two of her payments, so that the company had sent a collector there; and she added that if he wanted to be a friend of hers he wouldn't work for a paper which stood for such crookedness.

But Renfro persisted, and before he left her door had her subscription and a week's payment in advance. He also secured four other subscriptions before he turned into his last square.

"Pretty good, old boy, considering the time you spent in getting warm, and that you're a new recruit." he said and then laughed. He had been talking out loud and the woman who was hurrying past him turned round to stare back.

The wind whipped the tops of the trees and made them crackle and roar. The air was so cold that flurries of frost seemed to come out of nowhere but swirl around everywhere. And it was dark except where the street lights or those in the houses threw long hard gleams out into the street.

Suddenly, Renfro stopped. Lurking in the blackness ahead of him was a low set figure, followed by a big dog—the airedale he had seen the night before and the night before that. Renfro dropped onto his knees so that he could be concealed behind the water plug and its shadow, and he watched.

A sudden light from an opened door fell on the big dog, and showed it to be with the short, heavy set man. As soon as the door was closed Renfro was sure he heard a low growl, saw a threatening movement and directly afterward the dog rushed past him, running as if frightened to an unusual degree.

The light was gone again. Renfro put his hands over his eyes a minute to accustom them to the darkness again, and then rubbed them vigorously together. The third and fourth fingers on his left hand felt dull. He slipped off his glove and rubbed them with snow.

A half nervous laugh shook him. Suddenly he had remembered, no doubt on account of the cold water plug against his body, of the time he had put his tongue against a frozen pipe.

The shadow across the street lengthened. The heavy man was slouching down the street again, up to Judge Wier's shrubbery and then to the window thru which he had gazed the night before. Renfro was sure that it was because there was no light in that part of the house.

But the rest of the house was lighted and if the door were open the stranger could see into

the other room. And he lingered long enough and close enough to the window to be studying the features of the whole family if they were there.

Renfro, stiff from his posture and the cold, could not move. The big dog had been afraid of the man. He would no doubt half kill Renfro if he discovered that the boy was following him. Besides, Renfro reflected, if you want to unravel a mystery you have to follow a clue to it and not burst into open opposition.

The lights in Judge Wier's house changed at that minute. The part which had been lighted was darkened and the front rooms became bright instead. And then the lurking stranger again retired to the shrubbery.

As he had done the night before when he neared the Judge's house Renfro dropped onto his hands and knees and crawled to the shrubbery but no one was there. Still some one had been there and that some one had had something in mind which would do harm to either the Wier home or family he was sure.

Judge Wier has scores of enemies. He was noted as giving the stiffest sentences of any

judge in the city. Auto speeders met with as little mercy at his hands as did the most dangerous criminals.

"I—really—out—to—warn—him," Renfro chattered, "but—still—he'll—laugh." But he did call a number. A tired central informed him that she could get no one on that line. It seemed to be out of order.

Then Renfro went back to the kitchen and Mary with a determination in his mind. He would find some sort of an excuse to give his parents for being very late the next evening. Then he would follow the short, heavy set stranger. He would see if he took the same direction his dog did every night—down toward the big house where the tin roof rattled and made such warning noises.

An excuse. He frowned, when Mary started to speak but she talked anyway. "Where's them six turkeys you wanted me to cook, Renny?" she began, "If it's the cleanin' of them I have to do then I better begin now and—"

"And," Renfro interrupted her laughingly, "Mary, you're a peach with the fuzz still on

most of the time. But I know the quality of your mind below."

He could hardly keep from dancing. Mary had suggested the excuse he wanted. The turkeys. Why he had to have them and what better excuse could he offer his parents than that he was working for new subscribers. His mother might object but his father would want him to win any contest he entered.

But before he told them he wanted to talk to Mary a little longer. "Mary" he began, "got any more rabbits?"

She shook her head. "He doesn't bring them regular."

"Then," Renfro, suggested, "how would you like for me to stop out there—Captain Pete's place is just a little distance from the end of my route—well, let's say about every other day and buy a couple of rabbits from the old fellow? Put in sort of a standing order?"

"Sure Renny, you're that thoughtful," Mary beamed, "And speaking of turkeys, Renny, I read another turkey story today. It has the most beautiful plot. And romance too. The man was a detective and—"

"And, Mary, we're going to have one too," Renfro added, "but please, Mary, do be a dear, and don't call me Renny any more. I've got a business name and I want my real friends to use it. After this to you, Mary, I'm Hooch—Hooch Horn," he imitated the route manager's tone exactly, "Hooch Horn, if you please, Mary dear."

CHAPTER VI.

HELEN WIER IS KIDNAPED.

BEFORE Renfro Horn had been awake three minutes the next morning he heard sounds of great confusion coming up from downstairs. His father was talking in a loud excited voice, his mother after giving a half tone scream began asking questions and even Mary was making her share of the confusion.

"Another bursted pipe," Renfro saw the heavy frost on the window, drew his conclusion and turned over to sleep until they called him.

Mary's heavy winter shoes clattered up the stairway, crossed the hall and came straight to his door. She peeped cautiously into his bedroom, her head encased in a pink breakfast cap thru which were run blue ribbons. Her mouth was half open, her eyes big and her whole face a map of mingled surprise, interest and horror.

"Renny—Renny," she called softly and then changed, "Hooch—oh, Hooch—your pa just brought in the morning paper and Helen Wier was kidnaped last night right out of her pa's

own home and she aint been brought back or they don't know nothin' about it and—"

Renfro was sitting bolt upright in bed. "What did you say, Mary?" he demanded. "Helen Wier kidnaped, When? And how did they find out? Now answer my questions first."

Observing directions, Mary told him. Helen Wier, the judge's twelve year old daughter had been studying in the little east library, as was her custom when the family and two guests went into the back of the house for coffee and a late lunch. She had been sitting at the table when they left; when they came back she was gone. That was all Mary knew.

The paper told Renfro a little more. There had been no outcry on Helen's part—no sound that anyone had heard. The room showed no evidence of a struggle except that a vase of flowers on the table was upturned and the books she had been studying, all were on the floor.

When the family had come back into the library Helen was not there. Her mother, thinking that she had gone upstairs to bed, had commented on her going without being told and began to talk of other things when she noticed

the books on the floor and became suspicious.

Helen Wier loved her books as she did her friends. She was very careful of them. She never would have left them on the floor behind her, open with their backs bent to the breaking point as were these. And the papers out of her notebook were scattered around and under the table.

Mrs. Wier muttered something to the rest about being sure something was wrong with Helen, rushed upstairs to her room and then had begun the search. That she had been kidnaped was an assured fact. The problem before the police who had been almost instantly summoned was to find out who did it and where the child had been taken.

"Weren't there no note wanting money?" Mary asked the question.

Mr. Horn who was reading the story shook his head. Mary in turn shook hers tho more wisely. "Then they'll be hearin' from the kidnapers before night", she said with conviction. "They'll be telling how much they want for her return and where to put it and giving all the directions. The book I studied in that

home correspondence course said that was the way it always went.''

She ended her speech triumphantly, but noticing about the same time that no one was paying any attention to her backed thru the dining room into the kitchen, where she talked to herself about the ''ignorance of some people''.

Renfro, after reading the short, and to him, decidedly unsatisfactory story, followed Mary out into the kitchen. ''The paper didn't say anything about whether or not the telephone wires were cut,'' he began.

Mary's homely fat face beamed. She liked to be taken into some one's confidence. ''Them detectives which are huntin' for a clue know mighty little,'' she said hotly. ''Now what course have any of them ever studied? They just happened to be in on the side of the political party which won at the last election, and when the city hall jobs gave out they just put them on the detective force.''

Without any doubt Renfro was in a state of confusion. He didn't know whether or not to go around to Judge Wier's house and tell the Judge what he had seen on the two successive

nights when he had been carrying his papers past their house, or to take his story to the police. But he did know enough to keep still until he decided what course to follow.

But he had come to the kitchen to ask a request of Mary, "For heaven's sake, Mary," he begged, "don't ever let mother know that place is on my paper route or it would be goodbye to that route and my new turkey customers. You won't, will you?"

Mary shook her head. "But are you working on some clues, Ren—Hooch?" she asked. "Now if you are, I could help you a lot with my book learning on detective work."

"Oh, I will need you all right." Renfro laughed. "Just you wait, Mary, and keep still a little while and then your chance will come."

It was hard work for Renfro at the breakfast table just to ask enough questions and talk enough about the kidnaping to avoid suspicion, without telling his parents anything he knew, or ask any of the questions in his mind. He went directly to the police station from the breakfast table. He found the chief of detectives a very busy man.

But still he managed to take time to see Renfro and talked a little until Renfro began to tell of the man he had seen lurking in the Wier neighborhood and then he banged his hand on his desk. "You're the fifth boy who saw some suspicious looking person lurking in that neighborhood," he laughed but there was a note of impatience in his laugh. "I've heard of everything from a colored wash woman to the judge himself."

After storming about how busy he was and how people who bothered busy people should be given jail sentences, the chief pointed toward the door thru which he intended Renfro to leave. "If you kids would read your school books," he said solemnly, "instead of a lot of detective stories written by old maids afraid to go out at night, you would have more sense about clues and everything else in general."

Outside Renfro pursed his lips. "All right, Mr. Chief," he thought to himself, "I'll work on my own clue. I've one and I hope your men don't find out a thing without it."

He found the entire Grant School aroused by the kidnaping. Girls, who had been brought to the building by their fathers under orders not to

leave the building until them came after them, stood in groups inside the hall and would not have ventured outside the building for a fortune. Some of the people seemed to think that Helen Wier was the first one to be taken in a kidnaping plot which was to rob Lindendale of all its girls.

Miss Turpin, the English teacher, allowed the members of her classes to discuss the affair. All sorts of reasons, were offered for the kidnaping, most of them being that of a ransom. But Renfro kept still. Judge Wier didn't have a fortune nor did he have resources to raise one in a hurry. Unlike Mary he didn't believe that a note would come in a few days demanding money, telling under what particular forest log to hide it and the conditions governing its hiding.

Miss Turpin herself ventured a suggestion. She too knew that Judge Wier was far from being a rich man. Now there was soon to come before the judge for trial a number of men charged with a series of election frauds. She wondered if they could have taken this course to frighten Judge Wier from giving them stiff

sentences.

"Well," Abie Lubin remembered his fine for speeding his father's car, "Anybody can't scare Judge Wier by nothing."

That afternoon the chief of detectives, having heard of Miss Turpin's suggestion telephoned the Grant building for her to come to his office after school. Renfro, too, received a telephone message. It was from Route Manager Morrison of the Evening Globe. He offered to send an extra boy to help Renfro carry his route in case he should feel uneasy.

Now that was the last thing Renfro wanted so he laughed at the suggestion and by so doing rose several notches in Morrison's mind. He went directly to the Circulation Manager with his praise. Mr. Bruce in turn smiled, "I said that boy would make good," he smiled. "Of course he won't make any money on Old Grief, but as soon as we're sure he's what we think he is we'll give him a regular route. And I shall have the pleasure of telling his father that he was wrong in his prediction, and I was right in mine."

Renfro fairly rushed along his route that

afternoon. Still he searched for new subscribers. It would be foolish he knew to go out to the big Hall house and the little shack adjoining it until it was dark. Yet he was going.

It was very quiet at Judge Wier's house. The people who crowded there in the morning had gone home. The house was darkened so that Mrs. Wier could be kept quiet.

Renfro rolled his copy of the Evening Globe, started to throw it onto the porch and then stopped. Why not take it around to the back door? That would give him a chance to pass the shrubbery and the window thru which the man had peeped on two successive nights. He decided to do so.

The shrubbery was intact. The inside of the window was covered with a heavy coat of frost. Renfro looked thru it but could see only the green blind which had been pulled to the very sill. And then he saw something on the outside of the pane.

He stepped close to the window, and looked up at the two strange looking things. They were about two inches apart, white and stiff and made up of—?

And then Renfro almost shouted. They were part of a pair of a man's eyebrows. Memory of the frozen pipe with his boyish tongue stuck against it, and the red skin left fast to the pipe, made him understand this situation. The man who had stood close to the window pane had pressed his face against the cold glass while he watched the scene inside the house, his eyebrows had been frozen to the pane more firmly than he had thought and when he, suddenly frightened, had pulled away from it he had left these portions of his eyebrows behind him.

"My first clue" Renfro told himself and reached into his pocket.

CHAPTER VII.

RENFRO TAKES THE EYEBROWS.

RENFRO'S hand trembled so that he could hardly pull his knife from his trousers pocket. It was followed by a notebook, from which he tore two sheets of paper. Quickly he opened the blade, the thinnest of the three in his knife, warmed it with several breaths and then slipped it under one of the frozen eyebrows on the window pane.

Zip! It came off—frozen, intact, as solid as it had been when left on the frozen pane. Carefully Renfro wrapped it in one of the pieces of paper. By the same process the other portion of an eyebrow was likewise treated. With both precious packages of what he considered a magnificent clue stored safely in his most secure inner pocket Renfro shouldered his now empty paper bag and started toward home.

The desire to journey out to the big Hall house was almost overpowering him. But wisdom warned him against making the trip. It was late—it would be eight o'clock before he

could get home. If he arrived later than that there would surely be a family conclave held, the decision of which might mean that tho he continued to carry his paper route he would be given no time to either get new subscribers or to follow the clue which fatè had thrust into his hand.

Renfro was almost stunned with his good fortune. In his pocket was the only clue which, according to the latest reports he had heard, had yet been found. And he was going to keep it and work it out himself. The chief of detectives had laughed once. the next laugh would be at his expense, Renfro vowed, and because he had discovered a clue to the identity of the person or persons who had kidnaped Helen Wier.

All the way home on the car he kept his hand pressed over the pocket in which was the clue. Off the car, walking down the home avenue he watched surreptitiously for a possible bandit. No lady of rank ever guarded her jewels any more closely than Renfro Horn did the two mysterious eyebrows.

All around him the bitter wind stung and

lashed and hurt like a keen edged knife. It drove white hard clouds across the sky and at times hid the moon. But still it was a much lighter night than the one preceeding it had been. Neither Helen Wier nor any other girl could be successfully kidnaped on a night like this.

"But detectives could follow a clue mighty well," Renfro turned in at his own walk, and patted his chest, "only right now they haven't any clue."

His father who had just come past the police headquarters on his way home from the office, gave testimony that his conclusion was right. The clue suggested by Miss Turpin about the men implicated in the election frauds was being traced down but no one hoped for any results.

While they were at dinner Mrs. Horn who had been doubly uneasy over Renfro's lateness and also his father's, voiced her complaints in fretful language. Mr. Horn, provoked as always by his wife's fussing moods issued sharp orders to Renfro, "No trips out at night onto that route," he said, "and hereafter you be home at six thirty. Do you under-

stand?"

Renfro nodded, and reaching into his pocket pulled out the rules Morrison had given him the first day. "Dad," he said soberly, "Every business has its own rules, and the Globe's carrier system has its own. You expect your employees to follow yours if they expect to rise in your business. If I'm to rise to success with the Globe I'll have to follow these."

His mother's eyes were distinctly hostile but Renfro looked away from them straight into his father's interested ones, then back to his paper and read his rules in a clear, determined boyish voice—

"Never fail to deliver a subscriber.

"A good carrier will get two new subcribers and increase his route two each week.

"Bills must be paid when due. Only lame ducks pay part of their bills."

Mrs. Horn sniffed scornfully, caught a gleam of authority in her husband's eyes, rose with a rather indifferent apology and strolled into the library. At a nod from his father Renfro read on—

"Collect your route thoroughly once a week.

The meanest man in the world is the man who would beat a newspaper carrier.

"Tell your customers you come thru the snow and rain and cold six times a week to their door, for their accommodaiton, and ask them if they can't arrange once a week to have your money for you.

"Get your delivery thru as quickly as possible. The mothers want to read the Globe before the fathers come home for supper.

"And remember the quitters fail while the boys who respond to responsibility always succeed as boys and as men."

When he finished his reading Renfro carefully folded the paper and put it back into his pocket. He heard his father cough, looked up, caught his wink and rather low declaration, "I recall my command. These rules are about the best things I ever heard. Obey them—that's all."

Renfro ventured audible thanks. But he cautiously remained in the dining room when his father left for the library. He knew that his father would have it out with his mother and that it would be much better if he were not a

listener to their argument. Besides he wanted to see Mary.

With his hands in his pockets he strolled into the kitchen, watched Mary stir something into a batter and then carelessly asked, "Did you see Captain Pete today, Mary?"

To his surprise Mary nodded, "You did, Mary," he ejaculated, "How did he look?"

"Cross—fierce like to be sure," Mary returned. "I didn't buy none of his rabbits. They weren't fresh like. And he had the nerve to argue with me that frozen rabbits is allus good even if they wuz froze the week before last."

A straight look at Mary, and a little delay on Renfro's part. Then he smiled scornfully at himself. Experience had taught him that no one could be trusted better than Mary. Slowly he pulled the two pieces of paper out of his pocket, laid them on the table, unfolded them so as not to disturb the arrangement of their contents and called Mary.

In a low, guarded tone he told Mary of the man who had crouched at Judge Wier's window, of his trying to follow him and of the

finding of the eyebrows. "They're my clue, Mary," he ended proudly, "You're going to help me find the man who has these missing eyebrows and who kidnaped or who helped kidnap Helen Wier—aren't you?" And he breathed deeply. "Without the help or knowledge of any member of the detective force."

"Yes, yes," Mary whispered, her sibilant tones high with excitement. "I'll help you and just us two will do it. I know how to follow that clue. Them detective lessons will come in handy now. I was just beginning to think that mebbe I had wasted my money but now I know and—"

"Mary," Renfro's hand clasped over her arm, "Did you notice this afternoon? Were Captain Pete's eyebrows—"

"Why I couldn't see them," she whispered back. "He had a long scarf over his head and Hooch, it came clean down to his very eyes. You don't think it was him—do you, Hooch?"

Renfro shook his head. "But we're going to watch everybody who is old and who might be a criminal or a maniac or who could have had some reason for kidnaping Helen Wier. In

other words we've got to find the man with the missing eyebrows."

Mary nodded vigorously.

"And, Mary," Renfro was folding the paper again, "We've got to be very careful of these same missing eyebrows which are our only definite clue. I'll hide them away carefully."

His mother called him just then to hunt her a book he had been reading a few days before. She was still decidedly cool in her treatment toward him. But Renfro was more courteous than usual and before he left the room to go to bed, she was quite motherly to him.

In bed Renfro reviewed the day's happenings and tried to map out a plan for the rest of the week. He must do his route work first. That was his job. Then when each day's work was over he could follow the clue. If only the dectives failed to find Helen Wier he was sure he could.

"And I must get my new subscribers," he was ready to close his eyes. "The paper says two new subscribers a week, but my record must be five a day for a time if I get those turkeys. And I must have them. I've promised

Mary."

Before he left for school the next morning he slipped into the kitchen and bantered with Mary a minute or two. "I've earned two of your turkeys, Mary," he told her, "So be finding out ways to dress and cook them."

Then he explained to her the system he was following in order to win them. At the back door he gave her a last word of advice. "Mary, if Captain Pete or any mean looking stranger comes to our door, look at his eyebrows if you have to sit on him to do it," he smiled.

"All right, Hooch," Mary promised in return.

CHAPTER VIII.

RENFRO GETS A SHOCK.

NOT until he was in Miss Turpin's class did Renfro have an opportunity to hear anything about the kidnaping of Helen Wier, otherwise than that which had been in the morning newspaper. And in them had been the statement that all clues offered by members of the detective force and members of the Wier family had been followed down and led to nothing.

But in Miss Turpin's class a late comer to school brought more news. Judge Wier had received a letter that morning in the first mail. It was just a note written by Helen herself, in her girlish scrawl. She was well she said and comfortable. That was all.

But the note had been mailed in a city mail box directly across the street from where Judge Wier lived. That gave the detectives a new clue. They were—

And then Renfro remembered his clue—the missing eyebrows. With great deliberation last night he had chosen his hiding place—be-

tween the case and the pillow itself. But his father had called him late and he had forgotten all about his valuable possessions.

At the close of the recitations he went to the dean, obtained permission to use her private phone and slipped alone into her inner office. He talked in a very low tone. First he called his home number. And then he almost shouted over his own good fortune. Mary had answered the call.

"Don't talk, Mary," he cautioned, "don't say anything which would give me away. It's Hooch. Has anybody made up my bed yet?"

Mary herself had—just a little while before.

"Then you didn't bother them—my clues," he almost implored. "You know what I mean Mary—those eye—eye—you know."

Mary knew.

Then Renfro told her where he had put them. No, Mary hadn't seen them, but if he would wait she would run up stairs and see if she could find them. A long wait followed during which Renfro counted several hundred digits to make the time hurry and then he heard Mary's voice once more.

It was terrible—full of tears, of fear and of grief. They were gone—Renfro's leading clues. She had shook his pillows, quite as was her usual custom, had swept his floor and then and—"

The rest of her speech was lost. Renfro had dashed the receiver back onto the hook, slipped as fast as he could to his cloak room, donned his cap and gloves and was down at the principal's office. His white face, his dark staring horror stricken eyes gave proof to his statement that he was sick and he was excused for the rest of the morning.

Darting across streets in front of automobiles, down alleys thru which he had not been in months, panting, puffing, and never stopping, Renfro rushed into his own back gate, up the walk and into the kitchen where Mary was weeping copiously. A few questions from him, a few answers from her and they were both down in the basement, right into the furnace room.

No, Mary didn't remember where she had emptied the sweeper that morning. She usually did but this morning she had been busy think-

ing out excuses she could find for going out to Captain Pete's and discovering the condition of the old hunter's eyebrows. She sobbed audibly while she talked. Mrs. Horn had gone up town to a sale she informed Renfro and she could cry loud and get all the comfort she wanted out of so doing.

Together they searched thru the trash pile, then all over the basement floor, and all the way up and down the dark stairway. And then Mary remembered the garden plot. The ash man had asked her to empty her sweepings on the ash pile. He often found pins and needles and interesting knick knacks for his little girl in people's ash piles.

And out there Renfro found one folded piece of paper and Mary the other. They flew into each others arms. Back in the kitchen Mary found her family Bible and made room in it for Renfro to place the precious possessions along with the bit of her baby hair and one bridesmaid's dress and her long ago admirer's picture. Mary informed him that she was going to buy some black paper, some white paint and make a reproduction of the eyebrows for their

everyday use in hunting down clues.

"The detective book said to make copies of everything you find in regard to a crime," she offered the proof of the wisdom of her suggestion.

"Well you guard your Bible, Mary dear, and wait a little while," Hooch begged her, now restored to health again and ready to return to school.

It was Jimmie Noel who at noon suggested to Renfro that he go see his route manager for suggestions about securing his new subscribers. "He's an old hand," he advised, "and he can give you pointers which will save you half of your energy."

Renfro hesitated. That might mean a loss of time and he had determined to go out to both Captain Pete's and the big house that night. Still "The Globe" was his business and a fellow's own business came first. Besides his father had given him permission to stay out late.

Renfro found Morrison rushing and fuming. Warren, route manager of the north side, had boasted that his boys were going to win

the most turkeys. "I can't have that," Morrison was urging two of his best carriers whom he had summoned in to act in an emergency. "Fellows, this is just like a big basket ball game. Are you going to let your enemy's team beat you without a struggle?"

Then he saw Renfro, "Hello, Hooch Horn," he said genially, "How can I help you, old man?"

Renfro's list of twenty new subscribers went onto the counter in front of Morrison. "Two turkeys won already," he smiled. "And I thought perhaps you could give me some suggestions on how to win four more."

A smile spread over Morrison's face and then it stopped suddenly as he examined the list of names. "Ward's no good," he ejaculated. "Didn't Andy tell you? He beat him out of a bill. And Newkirk did the same and that Patterson woman—"

"But they all paid in advance," Renfro interrupted.

Morrison stared at him. "They did!" he half shouted and drew his hand across his forehead. "They did! Well how in the thunder did you

get money out of them before they got the paper? Boy, you must have a wonderful line of talk."

Arm in arm he and Renfro walked to the door. "Go to it, Hooch," was Morrison's last advice, "win these turkeys and I'll put up the best feed in any hotel you choose. The south side always does take the prizes. But for Old Grief to win first honors, Hooch, that would be the surprise of the Globe during the sixty years it has been a paper."

"Say," he called Renfro back, "Bruce said you had guts, when he hired you."

Renfro remembered that statement of Bruce's as he worked against great obstacles for subscribers that afternoon. But he stuck, tho there seemed nothing but obstacles in front of him and finally counted out his five new names. "Turkey number three," he laughed and pulled out his watch.

Seven-thirty o'clock and a heavy darkness everywhere. The street lights were dim tonight and there was almost no one out on East Washington. Judge Wier's house had been guarded by a detective, not because of the discovery of

a new clue but Mrs. Wier's nerves from the morning's note had demanded one.

At the little corner grocery Renfro bought a hot dog sandwich and some weak tea and ate and drank standing close to the door. No one passed except a colored woman carrying home her "wash." Out on the street he hurried down toward the big house and the shack beyond.

He stumbled thru the underbrush at the side of the road, over the rail fence and into the lane between the two orchards. A dark form loomed before him. He held his breath and stood still. A low sniff came to him, a joyous bark and Lang Tammy was against him, his big shaggy body almost overturning Renfro. He grabbed one end of the bag and the usual game of pulling followed.

"Like to play, old fellow?" Renfro patted his head. "Next time, old boy, I'll bring you a hot dog if I have to go without one myself."

While he talked to the dog he caught a glimmer of light in the big house, up on the second floor at the right side in the dormer window where there were still shutters. It didn't linger there long and when it went out the whole house

was left in darkness. Nor was it lighted again.

Renfro turned his back on the big house and stumbled across the field toward the shack. The orchard was desolate and rocky with a few remnants of trees which never bore but in the darkness they were formidable looking and their roots stumbling blocks.

After the orchard came the lane again and then the open space around the shack. A gleam of light from the window told Renfro that Captain Pete was at home. Before he crossed to the door Renfro ordered Lang Tammy "to go home" and after a little the big dog slouched away.

"He's been taught to mind all right," Renfro watched the big creature now an abject object of fear, slinking down the lane, "and he's been taught thru terrible cruelty."

Captain Pete answered the knock. His shaggy head was uncovered and he knitted his heavy white eyebrows all of which were intact. No, he did not have any rabbits. The Elks had come out that afternoon and gotten all he had for a big supper they were having. But he would have some the next day for Renfro.

Then Renfro grew a bit bold. "Sometimes, Captain Pete," he said quietly, "I know your old house is haunted or something, for I've seen lights in it. Now tonight—"

Captain Pete's head shook a vigorous denial. "There wasn't anybody there," he said. Why it was so full of wide open cracks that nobody couldn't stay there. And most of the tin roof was off by this time.

"Captain Pete may be innocent," Renfro drawled, back on the road again, "but he's sure not ignorant."

CHAPTER IX.

TRACKS AT THE CABIN.

AT the corner of Washington Avenue and Twenty-fifth street Renfro waited for a car. He shuffled his feet to keep them warm and rolled and unrolled his paper bag while he watched the next corner for the first glimpse of a headlight. The street light quivered and went out, came on again and once more began to grow dim.

When out of Plum Street sprang a boy in uniform who rushed into the middle of the street, caught at the long wire hanging from the flickering light, gave it several jerks and was rewarded by the strong white light which replaced the flickering one.

In its light Renfro recognized Jimmie Noel, dressed for a hike, his provision bag swung over his shoulder, a stout stick in one hand and a bulky bundle in the other. He gave a shrill whistle. The one which came in return told that he was recognized.

The two boys met near the middle of the block. But before they exchanged spoken greetings Renfro saw the squad of khaki clad

boys who were following Jimmie more than a half square away. They halted under the street light to view the accomplishment of Jimmie. Two of them in turn shook the same wire he had. The street light grew even brighter.

"Bill Larrison's patrol,—the Black Bears," Jimmie nodded at the boys behind him. "They're going out to Twin Cedar Cabin for the night. Some of them are getting ready for their second class tests. Pete Northrup's going to cook."

Renfro's laugh was eloquent. Pete was the most awkward boy he knew. Visions of Pete in a kitchen were too much for him.

"Gee, I'd like to see him," he began.

"Come along then," Jimmie invited. "I'm a sort of a visitor myself. Going to give some of the tests for Bill. It'll be exciting too, I tell you. Queer things happening out at the camp recently, according to what the scouts tell, who have gone out there on over night hikes. It'll—"

But the presence of the eight other scouts, who had caught up with them, put an end to

Jimmie's flow of confidence. Instead he turned to the boy who seemed to be leader of the expedition. "Bill," he began, "this is Hooch Horn —a pal of mine. I'd like for him to go along."

"Sure!" Bill was inclined to want all the company he could get. He had heard much more about the queer happenings out at the camp than had Jimmie. Another recruit to his crowd would strengthen its fighting powers should they be called into use.

Renfro hesitated. Under ordinary circumstances he could have explained the situation to his father so that he would have been willing for him to go. But his mother's mood, due to his carrying the Washington Globe route, made him uneasy about his ability to do so now. However, Jimmie, the quick witted, came to the rescue.

"Let Ted Bright explain things to your father," he began. "He often does that for me when I want to get out. He's just like his dad—can talk folks into doing anything he wants them to do."

Renfro grinned. "All right," he agreed, remembering his father's opinion of the elder

Bright and how anxious he now was to stand in that man's good graces. "Dad's still home I'm sure. He can call him up from the corner grocery."

While Ted was gone the boys told Renfro about the overnight hike they had made the week before. The one before them tonight was a short one,—out East Washington to the second road leading down to the river road. Just beyond the land owned by Captain Pete Hall was that which the city scouts had bought for a permanent camp site.

"You know the old cabin out there," Ward Lane was the speaker now," the one with the two big cedar trees in front of it—just above the spring where the Indian chiefs fought," he talked rapidly, "we fellows went out a few weeks ago and repaired it so we could use it for overnight hikes. Now two patrols have used it but neither one of them will go out again. They saw—"

"Oh, Hooch," Ted's voice several yards away, was happy, "It's all right. I had to talk like sixty tho. And I didn't tell them we are going to stay all night in the cabin." He had

reached the group now and was laughing, "I think your mother believes we're going to stay all night in some sort of a hotel or other."

"No doubt," Jimmie laughed too. "With your explanations, Ted, and your blarney, she might think anything."

The patrol fell into regular order and took up its march. Jimmie and Renfro followed the others. Back over the last part of Renfro's paper route they journeyed. Near Judge Wier's house Jimmie remembered the kidnaping and wanted to talk about it. Renfro listened, answering the questions Jimmie asked but taking great care not to show unusual interest sufficient to arouse Jimmie's suspicions.

However, the lack of evident interest on the subject on Renfro's part disgusted Jimmie. And soon he began to talk about other subjects. The deserted house on the Hall place, tall and dark and ghostly, reminded him of Captain Pete's skill as a hunter. Jimmie had gone with the old hunter, whose boast was that he never shot his rabbits thru the body "ef they had the least part of a head."

The patrol slowed its pace and fell back to

Jimmie and Renfro. They were soon singing some lusty marching songs which put an end to the conversation between the two boys. And Renfro was glad that it did. He wanted to watch the landmarks along the road they were taking.

Just beyond the cabin they turned into a road leading to the river. Six years before it had been kept in good repair for the people who journeyed down to the fishing camp which was its terminus. But the camp had been moved, the road was little used and had been allowed to fall into a bad state.

Renfro stumbled over huge boulders in one place; in another he went shoe top deep into a rut of snow. The scouts were having like difficulties. Bill Larrison dropped his provisions and had quite a scramble in getting them back into his bag again.

At the foot of the bluffs they climbed a fence, made of rails and wire, crossed a field, hurried down a lane at the end of which loomed two tall cedar trees. The dark blur back of them Renfro knew was the cabin. Visions of a roaring fire in the big fire place the scouts had

told about building, began to cheer him when the patrol stopped.

"They're going to pay their respects to Chief Wampum and Big Eagle," Jimmie gave the information.

He pushed Renfro close to a structure built after the fashion of a pig pen. "The fellow built it around the graves so that the cattle and horses couldn't harm them," Jimmie continued. "They're real Indian chiefs. Tell you about them tonight. The scouts who come out here always have to pay their respects to them."

A long wailing sound came from one of the boys, followed by Bill's heavy, gutteral, "Oh, chief, have you anything to say to your braves tonight?"

Absolute silence answered his question. A few minutes' wait and Bill ordered his patrol to march on to the cabin. The march was uninterrupted except for a large dog which moved near the boys. One of them started to drive it away but Renfro intercepted him. "It's a dog I know," he said, and called softy, "Lang Tammie."

One minute the dog stopped, hesitated, sniffed, turned and ran back up the hill. Renfro watched him out of sight. Then he went on to the cabin, into which most of the boys had already gone.

Two coal oil wall lamps had been lighted when Renfro entered the room. From their light he saw that the partitions had been removed and the cabin thrown into one big room, a mammoth fireplace was in the center of the north wall. Bunks had been built along the south one.

Several times during the last two years when Renfro had gone on hikes he had stopped at Twin Cedar Cabins to get a drink from the spring, its water was noted as being the coldest and clearest in the vicinity.

Too, Renfro had been interested in the landmarks around the site. He had heard, years before, the history of the spot and had seen the old woman about whom they told the wierd story which had made the site famous. When she had been but fifteen years old two Indian chiefs had seen her, both had wanted her for his squaw and they had fought a duel at the

spring, where both had been wounded.

Their braves had carried them away. Years afterward they had returned and paid respects to the white girl for whom they had fought. She was an old woman then, but had enjoyed the visit and recounted it ever afterwards with much pleasure.

"And when they were dead," Jimmie, as if reading Renfro's thought, suddenly said, "their braves brought them back and burried them near the spring. Those were the graves you passed tonight."

Renfro was inclined to be incredulous. "Queer I never heard about those graves before," he said.

"Yes, it is queer," Jimmie grinned.

Bill was grumbling over near the fireplace. "Somebody's been at the provisions again," he said. "The soap's all gone. Why," he shook an empty bucket, "so's the lard—" farther investigation—"and the eggs you brought out yesterday, Hank, and—" he looked at some prints on the floor—"whoever it was had a dog."

Big prints on the floor made him decide it

was a large dog. Except for grumbling over the loss of the provisions, the other scouts paid little attention to the prints, but to Renfro they held intense interest. While they built a roaring fire in the fireplace he took his flashlight to add to the light furnished by the coal oil lamps and examined the prints closely.

Yes, they had evidently been made by an airedale dog. But close to them were the muddy prints of a large shoe, the sort worn by a man who was accustomed to hunting. Smaller tracks were confusing. They might have been made by a small scout, but still they were narrow enough to have been made by a girl's sport oxford.

Renfro put some newspapers over one and on top of them put his paper bag and mackinaw. The other boys had piled their mackinaws and provision kits on the floor. In his heart was one hope—namely that they would not remove his things. He had laid them down so carefully that he was sure the footprints would remain intact and he could study them more closely in the morning.

Yes, it was possible. Helen Wier's kidnapers might have brought her to this cabin the night

they took her. They might have kept her there until morning and then gone on down the river. they might—

"Out with the lights." Bill Larrison's voice became a low growl. "Out with your lights, fellows and in a body move to the window."

CHAPTER X.

THE LIGHT ON THE INDIAN GRAVES.

RENFRO grasped one of the wall lamps, lifted it from its socket and with all the power of his lungs blew down the chimney. The blaze was instantly extinguished and left a smoking wick. At the same moment Scout Brown had extinguished the other. Outside there sounded faint footsteps. But when the boys reached the window no one was outside. The door was opened, the scouts circled the cabin, and even journeyed to the spring but no one was there.

"Bill's excited," Jimmie confided to Renfro, "He's watching for the lights at the grave."

"What?" Renfro was amazed.

"Oh, last summer when we were out here, one of the scoutmasters, who knew all the old men and women around here, told the boys that once every ten years the two chiefs would come back to again fight by the spring. And they believed it. The other two troops which were out here said that at midnight queer lights played around the graves and word had gone out that

this is nearing the time for the two braves to appear."

Renfro laughed and moved close to the fire. "Of course he smiled, "you don't believe it."

Jimmie in turn asked a question. "You heard those steps—didn't you?"

Renfro nodded and smiled. "But you didn't see anything nor anyone," Jimmie continued.

Another nod from Renfro. "And Hooch," Jimmie moved closer to him. "You saw those footprints."

This time he excited Renfro's interest. He was intensely concerned in those footprints. He could hardly wait for morning to come to give him an opportunity to study them. He felt that an answer was due Jimmie, "Yes, I saw them," he said, "And they are sure big ones."

"Now I tell you—"

But Jimmie didn't get to tell Renfro anything more. The patrol was back in the room. Some of the boys had made weather observations while out of the cabin and they were anxious to mark them on their charts. A discussion on cooking meat followed their work and

then the ceremonials for the evening began.

They had just gotten to the most interesting part when Jimmie announced that it was bed-time. One of the rules of the cabin committee, in order to keep a strong friendship with the parents of the scouts, required the hikers to go to bed at a certain hour. And like good scouts they observed that rule.

The boys rolled up in blankets on the bunks. Several of them whispered. Jack Burton next to Renfro, insisted upon telling both Jimmie and Renfro of how his high school brother got angry every time he came out to the cabin. The fraternity to which he belonged had wanted to buy the cabin; but the scouts had offered a larger sum for it than did the fraternity. "We beat them to it," the little fellow finished, "and every boy in that frat hates me 'cause I told the committee they was wantin' it and—"

He trailed on and on but Jimmie's snores told that he was asleep and Renfro's mind was bent on other things. He saw again Captain Pete—the big cabin—the dog—Lang Tammie, and then the many foot prints on Twin Cedars' floor. In the morning—

But in the morning he didn't make his investigation. For hardly had Renfro gotten to sleep when he was awakened by a low warning voice. Sibilant whispers went from one bunk to the other. "The light, the light!" they whispered. "It's on the graves now."

Renfro raised on his elbow and saw that he was directly in range of the window and of the enclosure on the graves. And the boys were right. A wierd unearthly blue light was playing over some of the boards of the fence and over the two mounds inside the enclosure.

With quick breaths the boys watched it. Jimmie and Renfro went to the window. For several minutes the lights, alternating from purple to blue played along the graves and then suddenly they went out.

"I'm in favor of investigating them," Renfro began, turned away from the window, struck the bench with his foot and fell headlong to the floor. Something on which he landed slipped, he felt a soft wooly, mass and realized with a start that he had fallen on his own coat.

"And on the foot prints," he thought with a start.

"Light the lamp, Jim," he called. "I want to see what I've done."

"Hurt?" Jimmie Noel's voice was full of hope. A chance for first aid was not to be despised.

He carried the lamp to where Renfro lay. The other boys followed him. And with a sinking heart Renfro feared that if he had not destroyed the contour of the footprints the boys had.

Slowly and carefully he raised himself from the floor. He lifted the coat, his paper bag and then the paper. Below, it was just an indistinguishable lot of soil which had once been mud brought in on shoes—the shape of which Renfro would have given a small fortune to have been able to have told.

But now he knew that it was impossible.

* * * *

The next morning Jimmie, Bill and Renfro made a trip to the two graves while the other boys cooked breakfast in camp style. There were no marks around the grave, no sign of destruction nor any kind of invasion. Jimmie crawled over both mounds feeling his way carefully.

"It's mighty queer," was the only remark he made when his investigation was finished.

And Renfro and Bill nodded.

Back in the cabin the other boys were discussing the same happening. Before they left the cabin they made a vow to tell none of their experiences to the rest of the scouts but to have weekly overnight hikes out to the cabin. "Investigation hikes," Bill dubbed them.

On the way back to town the boys overtook a solitary driver in a low spring wagon. It was Captain Pete and he gave them a genial invitation to ride back with him. "Good hunting weather," he told them and laughed, "but I don't notice you fellows brought in anything."

"We were making a hike," Bill answered for the crowd. "We camped out at Twin Cedar cabin last night."

Captain Pete chuckled. "Where did you git them Indian mounds?" he insisted.

The boys looked at Jimmie but that worthy did not even offer to answer. Instead he changed the conversation back to rabbit hunting and got Captain Pete into a monologue again. While he talked, Renfro studied him—his face across

which there were long scratches and his shifting eyes. Sometimes they were as gentle as a woman's and again when he was angry they were cruel.

As the boys clambered out of the wagon, he gave a shrewd chuckle, "Didn't see anything queer out there last night—did you?" he asked. "Some of the scouts did last week, 'cordin' to what one of their mothers told me. Didn't see nothin'—you fellows—did you?"

And they disdained to even answer.

From the little restaurant where he went to supplement his camp breakfast, Renfro telephoned home before he went on to school. His father answered the telephone and he was in a very agreeable mood. He asked Renfro if he had enjoyed his trip and then gave him a telephone number which had been left for him the night before.

Renfro recognized the number as that of Morrison's telephone. The clock on the restaurant wall told him that he had time to go past the office on his way to school. Better talk face to face with Morrison than over the telephone, he decided.

The morning paper on the table had big headlines about the Wier kidnaping. The story it contained was almost a repetition of the one the Globe had had the evening before. No new clues had been discovered, according to the detectives. He also admitted that if any were uncovered they would be kept secret.

Then followed detailed interviews from all of the Wier servants, none of whom could or would add a bit of information to the stories already told. Renfro read them thoroughly. And while he ate his buck-wheat cakes, he wondered whether or not the cabin at Twin Cedars had harbored any of the kidnapers.

The lights outside the cabin had interested but not disturbed him. Now he was inclined to give them more attention. Of course, it was ridiculous to think that they were made by returning spirits, as some of the younger scouts seemed to think. But still thy did not just happen to come to the grave.

Back of their coming was some weird purpose, Renfro was sure. "I'll keep them in mind the next time I go out that way," he decided. "Jim's so interested in them that he'll ask me

to go with him again I'm sure. They may—''

With a rush of cold air the front door opened and Jimmie Noel entered the room. He had stopped at the office to see if his brother had carried his route on time. ''No complaints,'' he said cheerfully to Renfro. ''Going past home?''

Renfro shook his head. ''Have to see Morrison,'' he returned.

''I'm not going that way,'' Jimmie warmed his hands at the radiator. ''Have to go by home. But I want you to go back to the cabin soon, Hooch, with me. There's something back of those lights—something mysterious. You're a bear at working out mysteries. And for the good of Twin Cedar camp I want that one solved. If something isn't found out to prove those lights aren't ghostly things, that camp will be about as popular as a water snaked swimming hole for the scouts. You'll go with me—won't you, Hooch?''

''You bet!'' Renfro smiled. He was surely glad Jimmie had not connected the cabin with the kidnaping. He didn't want to share honors with Jimmie even in working out his kidnaping. clues. And besides he wasn't sure that the Twin

Cedar cabin held any part in the episode. Yet he wished he had not fallen and himself destroyed the footprints.

CHAPTER XI.

RENFRO BECOMES A MENTOR.

MORRISON was at his desk. He jerked out a surly answer to Renfro's pleasant, "Good morning."

In the same mood he turned in his chair and saw Renfro. The frown by some mysterious manner was jerked into a smile. "Hello Horn," he beamed. "Got my message—didn't you?" In rapid jerks he continued, "Needn't have bothered to come in. Could have told you over the wire. Want you to take a pupil on Old Grief."

A look of dismay on Renfro's face answered him. "Oh, no—haven't the least idea of taking it away from you," he hastened to reassure Renfro. "I want you to take Merl Riker out there with you this afternoon and teach him how you get new customers."

He pointed to a chair and Renfro dropped into it. But there was no break in Morrison's conversation. "Good kid, but lacks pep—Mother's a widow—needs the money—gave him one of our best routes. He's good to collect,

cause the people are all good pay. He doesn't lose a customer. Doesn't get any new ones either. Just keeps the route the way it is. And he's got the best route for new customers in town—all except Old Grief," he winked. "Now the Riker family will need a Christmas turkey and the Globe needs new customers out there. See?"

"Yes sir," Renfro got in an answer this time.

"I'll send a sub out in Merl's place this afternoon and you take him with you," Morrison continued. "Keep stiil about it. Don't want to make a precedent out of this—unusual case—feel sorry for the family. All the kids needs is some pep. Inspire it. Get me, Horn?"

Renfro nodded. "I'll do my best," he promised.

And he kept his word. When he reached the station that night, a slender boy with a face which was molded along feminine lines, and whose clothes were well worn met him. Renfro studied him a minute before he began talking. As he studied he decided that like Morrison, he was going to like this boy. He lacked enterprise. But Renfro believed that this was on ac-

count of shyness due to his poverty.

For when the boy lifted his eye lashes there was a quality of steel in his gray eyes. His mouth too had a firmness at the corners that promised much. He walked along the street in quick long steps, which matched those taken by Renfro and he was ever in an alert, ready to listen attitude.

"We'll try some new customers first," Renfro volunteered. "Then you can help me throw my papers and if we have time we'll get a few more."

"All right," the steel quality was also in the boy's voice.

Renfro consulted his book, found a number three doors away and led the way to a little L shaped cottage. A big, burly man came to the door. "Do you read the Globe?" Renfro began in a pleasant way.

The man started to shut the door with a gruff, "No," when Renfro's foot slipped just inside enough to prevent that. "I am the new carrier on this route," he began. "I have taken it for several years' service, so I wanted all the people to know me."

The man stared at him more kindly and opened the door a bit farther himself. "I don't like the Globe," he said, the surliness still in his voice. "It comes too late in the evening and—"

"It came too late in the evening," Renfro smiled. "I bring it before any other carrier on this route brings the other evening papers. And I can prove it. You ask any of the people on my route."

The man hesitated. Renfro reached into his bag and brought out a paper. "I'll leave one now and stop on my way home to get your order," he smiled.

The man took the paper and laughed. "I'll see," he promised. "I'm going to call up the grocer on the corner and see if you are the first boy out with your papers," he added. "My wife wants an early paper, so she can read it before she starts getting the supper."

Renfro turned to Merl as they walked toward the street. "After that I have to be prompt," he said. "We'll carry my papers now. From now on—I'll carry my route before I try to get a single new subscriber."

Merle nodded. "Yes, Hooch," he agreed.

"I'll remember that, too."

He reached out his arm for the papers and Renfro gave him half the bundle. Together they traversed Old Grief, with its pawn shops, second hand stores, lunch wagons, cheap butcher stores, army supply store and dozens of other "imitation places of business". Then they came into the poorer residence district, where the children fought for the honor of carrying the paper to the door. From this they passed into the street on which lived the old residents of Lindendale, who would not leave their ancestral homes.

"There," Renfro nodded toward the big house surrounded with shrubbery which needed trimming, "is where Judge Wier lives—Helen Wier's father."

Merle Riker stared. "Judge Wier helped my mother," he said simply, "I hope some one finds his daughter. He's a kind man."

Renfro laughed. "Most people don't know it," he added.

At one house Renfro stopped to collect. The woman had not had her money Saturday and was inclined to show an ugly disposition be-

cause Renfro had stopped for it in the middle of the week instead of waiting until the next Saturday.

It isn't convenient for me to pay every time," she said in a cross voice, "and if you're afraid to trust me, I'll get another paper."

Renfro looked straight at her. "I have to pay for my papers every week," he said. "And I come every evening thru the rain and snow and cold, right on time, because it's my job. And you—"

"I suppose you were going to say mine is to pay you on time too," the woman was still surly though she saw Renfro's logic before he had time to utter it all. "Wait."

She went into the house and returned with twenty cents.

"She'll pay next Saturday," Merle spoke before Renfro could. "She saw what you meant and knew you were right, too."

The route finished, Renfro again consulted his red book, in which all his prospective customers were listed. "Want to try a place of business?" he asked, "Or, are all the people on your route families."

Merle shook his head and explained that he had three blocks of the east side stores in his route, though few of the merchants who kept them were regular customers. "They buy the papers on the street," he explained, "so I don't think it's much difference whether or not I have them."

"Means more money for you," Renfro gave the best reason first, the one which he knew would appeal to a boy needing money. "Then, too, when they want a paper they buy most any one. If the boy they meet doesn't have the Globe they may ask another boy for one, but if the second one doesn't happen to have one then the chances are even that they will buy another paper. Get me?"

Merle nodded.

So back to the pawn shop, and second hand clothing store district they went. It was a butcher shop, however, into which Renfro led the way. He smiled at the man behind the block and waited until the customer had been served and departed with his bundle. "Read the paper I left yesterday?" he asked, "and how did you like the market report?"

The butcher came around from behind the block to discuss the market report. He admitted that he had liked the report in the Globe. "But I can buy it of the street boy who comes in every evening," he volunteered. "I don't need to bother to subscribe. It wastes my time."

"Oh, no," Renfro shook his head but was very courteous, "It won't take you nearly so much time to pay me once a week as it does to pay the boys on the street every day. And sometimes they forget to come in or you have a customer and they can't wait, then you have to go to the door and hunt one up."

The man grinned. "Oh, beat it," he laughed good naturedly, "you want my subscription. Is it a prize?"

"I want to save you time," Renfro was still serious, "and money. Sometimes you can't get the Globe when you go out after it, because the boys may be sold out. Then you have to take another paper and you have a different market report. And you may lose money because the other will not be so thorough."

"Yes," the butcher was serious now. "You

are a good talker, and I will subscribe to save time. It is just as you say, though I never thought of it before. You make out a card and I'll pay now and you bring it tomorrow. Early!"

"Yes, sir," Renfro began making out the card.

The next prospective subscriber was a woman, one of the have-to-be-convinced of everything sort. Renfro had left her a paper the evening before and she had read it but yet she couldn't see much difference between it and the evening paper she had taken for five years. Renfro opened one of his papers, carried it to the library table, showed her the Woman's page, explained the information which it contained, talked about the features, the editorials, and knowing the nature of most women, ended with its strong society column.

"I'll try it," she agreed. "I'll take it a week and then if every copy is as good as your two samples, I'll subscribe regularly."

"Every copy is just like the sample." Renfro was sober then.

But outside he and Merle chuckled. "She thinks we get out extra good papers for

samples," they laughed and laughed.

"I'd like to go back to the first man you gave the sample paper," Merle said at the sidewalk. "I think I understand now how to get customers but I'd like to see what he does."

Back to the little L shaped house they went. The man was ready for them. "The man at the corner says you are all right." What I want is an early evening paper, so I'll sign your subscription card."

"That is the secret of getting subscriptions," Renfro confided to Merle when they were alone again." Find out what your prospective customers want and then show them that your paper is the one which gives them exactly that—from early papers to those which are carefully folded and put in a convenient place on the front porch."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCRATCHES ON THE WINDOW.

MARY was in the kitchen when Renfro stormed in the back entrance at his home that evening. He heard her begin to rattle pans and he knew that she was going to see to it that he got an extra good supper. "Another turkey, Mary," he sang out while he hung his paper bag and cap on the hooks she had given to him.

Cautiously she came to the door. "There's company in the living room with your paw and maw," she whispered sibilantly. "They're talking about the kidnaping. I've been lying down close to the door—face and stomach to the floor," she confided. "I crawled backwards when I heard you comin' and Glory be, I got clean thru the dining room without knockin' anything over."

Renfro followed her into the kitchen. "Gee, but I'm hungry," he sniffed. "Mary, love, what have you to feed me?"

Mary became stern. "A pretty detective you are, Mr. Renny," she refused to use his manly

nickname at the hour of his failure in her eyes. "Aint I been throwin' clues in the shapes of hints at you ever since I begin talkin'? Aint I done got down off my own dignity and told you how downcast I was on that floor? And what's to prevent you but a empty stomach from followin' my example and learnin' things your paw and maw never would tell you?"

"Aw, Mary, don't be so hard on a fellow," Renfro's voice was pleading. "I was so hungry and I couldn't grasp any kind of a hint. Course I'm going to go in there. Only, for goodness sake, have my supper ready when the talk changes to other subjects!"

But Mary seized his shoulders. "You're goin' to do no such thing!" she commanded. "Your supper is in the warming closet. Take it out and eat it with the other things on the kitchen table. It's meself who's goin' back. If anybody starts into the room, distract them, Hooch."

The next minute she was down on the floor and wriggling her way across the dark dining room. A big red and green snake could not have made any more twists and turns than she

did in getting across the room. Renfro knew that she was so bulky that she was afraid to try to lie down in the dining room, so she had instead taken this way of getting to the door.

He held his hands to his sides to keep from laughing so that she could hear him. "Bulky but ambitious," he laughed, "and a good pal," he finished soberly.

Back he went to the supper, rattling the pans and dishes unnecessarily so that his parents would know that he was home and be more comfortable. Straight thru oyster soup, roast mutton and peach pie he waded. He was just ready to venture on a second cup of coffee when he heard Mary nearing the kitchen door.

Just outside the door she straightened. Disgustedly she spoke, "If them Wiers 'aint goin' to have some detectives from Chicago, and us with such a good clue."

Renfro's face fell. This then would probably be the end of his hopes to solve the mystery. Still there was a chance for him. No one except himself and Mary knew of the missing eyebrows.

Then he told Mary about his visit to Captain

Pete's cabin and the conversation. "Mary!" Renfro stood up in his excitement, "Pete's face was a dead give away when I mentioned the lights in the big house. His eyes were as scared as a kid's. He knows that somebody is there, and I'm going to find out who that somebody is and just where the rest of those missing eyebrows are."

Mary nodded her head. "Our part of them, Renfro, are still in my Bible," she assured him. "I've looked at them every hour to see they don't fade away. And I bought me a blackboard to reproduce them as your pa says, for our observation—so as to keep 'em in our mind night and day."

In the library Mr. Horn was telling the visiting lawyer about Renfro's experience with a paper route when the youngster entered the room. He boasted of his new subscribers to his mother's chagrin. "If she knew I was working for Thanksgiving turkeys she would die," Renfro laughed to himself. "I've half a notion to spring it on her now."

But he didn't. He lingered long enough to be sure that they were not going to talk about

the kidnaping any more, and then he went up to his own room. For a half hour he worked checking up on his new subscribers and collections. This done he took up the new magazine on his desk and tore off the cover. "It had been on his desk three days unopened—a happening which had never before occurred. And all because of his interest in the turkey contest and the Missing Eyebrow Mystery.

He read the last chapter of the serial. And then he sought Mary again. "It ended just the way I said it would," he told her waving the magazine in front of her. "The two fellows who took the jewels were Fred and Manuel and they hid them—"

Mary's hand was raised imperatively. "Listen Hooch," she said. "I've been making plans myself. Tomorrow night is my regular choir practice. Before I go to it I'll come out on Washington and we'll both go to them different places—one of us to the shack and the other to the big house. Then we'll see who is in both places at the same time. That way they'll have no chance to send signals or communicate to each other."

"Fine, fine, Mary!" Renfro's enthusiasm was all that Mary could ask. She murmured something about the pity being that Renfro too had not taken a correspondence course in detective work and her bosom heaved with pride.

"But, Mary," Renfro hesitated, "are you sure you won't mind missing choir practice?"

Missing choir practice was one of Mary's greatest horrors. In all the fifteen years that she had sung alto in the mission church. she had not missed one practice. And now she was planning to deliberately miss one.

But she wasn't. The next minute she set Renfro to rights on that. "I said I might be late," she said severely, "I'm countin' on us workin' fast. I'm not going to miss nothin' I tell you."

But she did miss something. Then next morning at exactly five o'clock the Horn telephone rang. Mary, calling down maledictions on the head of whoever would call at that hour, listened to the conversation at the other end of the wire and with a changed mien proceeded to Renfro's door.

It was Jimmie who called. The carrier boy

whose Morning Post route was adjoining his had badly frozen his foot the night before. His first aid work had relieved him somewhat the night before but this morning he could not walk. And Jimmie wanted Renfro to help him carry the other boy's route.

"I told him you would," Mary was hunting Renfro's heaviest coat. "It's not so cold as it was last night, Renny," And I knew you would want to be a good scout and help a carrier out. Now that's the way I am. When the soprano soloist was sick and out of church for a whole week once, I sang high sporano when it was the most important part in the songs and then dropped right back to alto when the low parts were most important. There's nothin'—"

But Renfro was motioning her to the door. "I've got to dress in a hurry," he told her. "You explain to father and let him make it right with mother. Now, Mary, for heaven's sake keep still before mother and don't get her started. Let dad—"

A few minutes later he was off, buttoning his coat collar as he ran toward the station at which Jimmie got his papers. And there he

found Jimmie waiting for him. "Hooch Horn," he said impressively, "you're a good scout. I called up six fellows' houses before I did yours and every place I got Hail Columbia, Happy Land for waking up the family. And you—"

"And I, Jimmie," Renfro said impressively, "I tell you the reason you didn't get the same dope at the seventh house was because Mary Dugan, good old scout, answered the phone."

And so flustered was Mary that morning with extra breakfasts and avoiding any mix-ups with her mistress that she forgot to read the morning paper. Renfro in turn did not have time to even think of such a feast. As he folded the papers he had glanced at the headlines, which told of Judge Wier's summoning the Chicago detectives and Mrs. Wier's getting another note from Helen, it also asserting that she was safe.

So she was frightened half "into fits" as she expressed it when Renfro rushed into the kitchen in the middle of the morning. "Mary, where is mother?" he demanded in a loud whisper.

Mary answered that she was out.

"Then I can talk," he added, "Mary, we are

lost; or our clue is—no, I mean discovered by some one else. I borrowed a morning paper last hour and there what do you think? Yesterday Mrs. Wier, while walking up and down the library happened to look at the window from which most of the ice had melted and discovered some little scratches I made with my knife when I scraped off those eyebrows."

He caught his breath. "Of course she doesn't know they're mine," he added. "But she showed them to the detectives and vowed they were not there before—that the windows were put in new this fall and were perfect and—"

His teeth chattering. Mary's big, strong, red hand went over his trembling ones. "Hooch Horn," she said sternly, "You aint worrying half so much over them finding a clue like ourn as you are because you're skeert they'll think you had something to do with that kidnaping! Now aint you?"

Before Renfro could answer she stormed on, "Well, they won't. You and me is too small fry to even be considered. They know you aint got sense enough to plan such a thing. If they thought we was workin' on a clue they would

give us the horse collar. And that's why we got to work this plot out, See?"

She shook him soundly. "We'll go out there tonight as we planned. And you git back to school. Pretty soon you'll have that sick excuse worn clean out. Git back, I say, in a hurry so that I can read the newspaper and see for myself just what they do know about them winder scratches."

CHAPTER XIII.

A TRIP TO THE CABIN.

IT was exactly a quarter of seven o'clock that night and Renfro with his paper bag almost empty had just turned the corner into South Washington Street when he ran plump—into Mary Dugan. She was puffing as one who had been undergoing great exertion.

"Hello, Hooch!" she managed a casual greeting and then burst straight into a monologue on the difficulties of her journey. She had hired her sister to come over to the Horn house to serve the dinner, and the sister had been late. Mary had boarded the wrong car and had had to transfer on her way out and—

"But Mary," Renfro exclaimed, "You're too early! Something broke down with the press, we got our papers late. I haven't got a single new subscriber and I have two more blocks to deliver."

"On both sides of the street?" Mary's question was direct.

"Sure!" Renfro was impatient.

"Then gimme me half of them," Mary held out her hands on which were gray cotton gloves and which looked like veritable apparitions in the darkness. "Now don't say I won't know where to leave 'em. I know I won't. But we kin work skilful—can't we? I'll start right across the street from you and you whistle at every house where I'm to stop."

"Some girl, Mary Dugan," Renfro began to count out papers into her hands, "Now where did you learn—"

"Hooch Horn," Mary interrupted him almost dropping her papers in her eagerness to explain. "You aint learned yet half the clues I learned in that detective course."

The papers tumbled again, and would have fallen had not Hooch caught them. "It's them gloves," Mary was quick to realize the impediments the bulky cotton gloves were in the paper carrying art. Her right one came off with a dash and was thrust into her coat pocket.

"Now gimme the part of the street you know best," she commanded. "Your whistler will be saved some that way."

A wave of Renfro's hand and Mary darted

across the street. Without any sign, or any communication except the keen whistles from Renfro, they finished the two blocks in record breaking time. And then they met at the end of the block.

"But I haven't got any new subscribers, Mary," Renfro hesitated, "I made my daily quota out several days ago and I can't break it, you know."

"And I made my rule agin' bein' late at choir practice several years ago," Mary's alto voice was very dry, "but I'm thinkin' this here business is worth breakin' anything. This here affair of our goin' down there tonight means either you miss your subscribers or I miss my choir practice and—"

"Mary," Hooch's hand went on her arm. "Since you are so good a sport, I can make up my subscribers Saturday and Monday."

"You ought to be gettin' them other subscribers from our own part of town, Hooch," Mary offered advice, "They'd be easier landed and—"

"But it doesn't seem fair to get into some other fellow's territory," Hooch began.

Now—"

Mary interrupted him in a determined voice. "Foolishness! Them circulars you had at home said for you to go anywhere. If you had a good route them other boys would be a comin' to it mighty fast. And if you have any business sense like the Horns all have, you'll follow my plan."

"All right," Renfro was very meek. Experience had taught him that it was folly to argue with Mary. "We go down this road, Mary, down the middle. It's as slick as glass and I expect we'd better hold on to each other. We don't want any broken arms."

Mary clutched Renfro's arm with her mittened hand. Together they slipped, they slid, then fumbled, and nearly fell on their way toward the lane which marked the turning off place for the big house, and the little shack.

The sky was clear, there were few trees along the road, and there was a half moon. So Mary and Hooch had no trouble finding the best place to scale the log fence. Mary refused all offers of help. She had climbed rail fences when she was a girl and knew the exact art with which

such a crossing was effected. Moreover she added with emphasis that she "was not an old lady yet by any manner of means."

Still she had not counted on the rails being coated with ice. And no sooner was she at the top of the fence than she was at the bottom on the other side. Fortunately it was on the opposite side of the fence she had landed and when Renfro scrambled over and stood beside her she was on her feet again.

She held herself with dignity and Renfro realizing that there are some things which it would cause a calamity to discuss was silent. She was the first one to speak. "You go to the shack and I'll go to the big house," she was the general again though great had been her fall. "It would be suspicious looking to Captain Pete for me, a single maiden lady to come knockin' at his door this time of night."

"Yes," Renfro's voice was meek. Mary never suspected that he was literally holding his sides to keep from bursting into gales of laughter.

"And," Mary was all dignity again. "I don't want any man to be buildin' up false hopes

on me. It is not Mary Dugan who has yet brought ruin to a man from raisin' their expectations and she don't begin now with an old time soldier."

"No, Mary," Renfro managed another sober response.

Just then there was a crackling and half roaring sound over in the shrubbery of the orchard. Just as Mary and Renfro stopped and clutched at each other a dark form came out with a rush and threw itself against Renfro's legs.

Mary stumbled, almost fell and then ejaculated a word which she had not used since she had become a choir singer, but Renfro patted the big dog and soothed him. "Lang Tammy, Lang Tammy," he crooned, and then he felt a broken strap on the dog's neck, "they've had you tied up tonight and you wanted to see me—didn't you?"

"Whose dog is he?" Mary demanded with asperity, thinking that Renfro had kept something from her.

But Renfro reminded her of the dog which had been with the old man whom he suspected of being Captain Pete's brother, and who he

was sure knew a great deal about the affair. "Yes, I remember," Mary was the general once again. "You'd better get rid of him if you can. Havin' him with us would be suspicious."

Lang Tammy was tugging at Renfro's bag. For a few seconds Renfro played with him, and while he did Mary fumbled in her pocket. She dropped something on the ice. "Some of my peppermints," she explained. "My Brother Sam—he allus says if you wants to be friends with a dog just give him some candy."

And then Renfro uttered a short, sharp command and Lang Tammy was back in the orchard again. Renfro was aware that the big dog would not show up again that night. The afternoon's tying had offended him. And he would stay away from the big house to get even with his master.

He watched the dark form in the orchard while they went up the lane, and he took the opposite direction from the one in which the big house lay. A few more rods of slipping and sliding and he and Mary arrived at their place of parting. He gave her some instructions about making her way around the big house.

"The main thing, Mary dear," Renfro was solicitous again, "the main thing is not to fall, you know."

"Yes, I know," there was a touch of humor in Mary's voice, "Me father used to say that I had the most trouble in keepin' my head but tonight it's a case of whin me worst trouble is keepin' me feet I'm thinkin'."

And then they separated.

Renfro found Captain Pete's door. The old man unbarred it, held high his little old lamp with the blackened chimney, identified his visitor and gruffly commanded him to come in. The rabbits were ready, but for the life of him he couldn't see any use of Renfro's coming so late. When he was young parents didn't allow their sons to be out so late, and—

"But I had to carry my paper route," Renfro spoke pleasantly, and the captain thawed to an extent.

When he went to wrap the rabbits in an old newspaper he muttered something about being short on paper and Renfro brought his two extra papers out of his bag. "Seeing you won't be a regular customer without being

shown the advantage of a newspaper, Captain Pete," Renfro smiled a winning smile, "I'm going to sample you for a while as the boys say. Every night I have an extra paper I'll bring it down to you and soon I'll warrant you'll be a regular customer. I always carry an extra so that if I get a new customer, I can leave the paper right then.

Pete shook his head. He muttered something about it being too far for a boy to come alone. All of which only made Renfro more determined to visit him. As he had declared the night before the actions of Captain Pete were evident that though innocent himself perhaps, he was not ignorant altogether about the kidnaping of Helen Wier.

Outside of the shack Renfro circled around to avoid suspicion, should Captain Pete happen to open the door again, and worked his way back to the meeting place he and Mary had appointed. He waited, he counted the minutes, he fumed, he fretted and still no Mary arrived. He pulled out his watch with its radio face and saw that it was a quarter after eight o'clock.

"Mary won't get to sing alto tonight," he

murmured to himself. "We'll get back to town just about the time it's over."

And then Mary came. She clutched at his arm. "I can't be stoppin' to talk," she was hurrying him toward the fence. "I've promised the leader I'd get there in time to practice the Sunday anthem and I will keep me promise too. You can go with me on the car, Hooch."

"And say," they were at the fence again, "I've got a few clues of my own. And," Mary put her foot on the first rail, "You help me all you can. That falling down sort of affected my constitution, Hooch."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MAN IN THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

MARY was the first one to speak, and then it was to reassure Renfro, "You needn't worry about your folks askin' any questions," she told him. "They went to the show unexpected like and won't know what time you get home. I heard your paw tell your maw he's got the tickets and he bought only two for he thought you needed to go to bed early after bein' out so late with your route."

Renfro nodded and felt a bit of relief. He and Mary were near the center of the car. Mary had chosen that spot because there were few passengers there and they could talk without being afraid some one could hear them.

All the passengers and even the conductor had stared at the odd pair when they boarded the car. Several had smiled broadly and Renfro had been indignant until he had happened to look at Mary and someway in her downfall at the fence she had gotten her hat turned completely around. The big red rose directly on the back of her hat was too much for him. And he

too giggled.

"Mary," he whispered, "Your hat's back slided and—"

Mary Dugan laughed heartily. "Don't make much difference," she added, "Me nose and face is so bloomin' red tonight I don't need the rose for any further touch of color to me make up."

And then she began to tell about her experiences. She had moved close to the big house at the corner at which she had arrived, keeping a close look out for the big airedale which she felt sure would turn up at the most unexpected minute. Carefully she had worked her way around the house—the west side, the south side, the east and there she had discovered her first sign of life in the big house.

A glimmer of light thru a torn place in the heavy blind over the window. She had realized in a minute that thru those thick blinds she would not discover anything. So she had felt her way around to the north, found a loose weatherboard, pulled it off and worked the blade of her knife, which she always carried, thru the plastering. A few vigorous, skilful

twists and she had worked a hole which made a good peeping place for her right eye.

Her homely face became alight with the joy of success. She had chosen that spot well. It gave her a view into the lighted room. Cautiously then she had worked out another peep hole for the left eye and then she had studied every move in the adjoining room.

After a time she had discovered that there was but one occupant and that he was exceedingly cautious. He moved always so that he was not near the window. He had passed the doorway only three or four times and each of these times Mary had studied him closely. He was short, heavy set, his hair was gray, his clothes of an ancient style and he was what Mary termed "uncouth" getting an "ou" sound which Renfro felt that he would always remember.

But he had never once turned his face toward the open doorway and Mary had not seen his face. So, of course, she knew nothing of the condition of his eyebrows. But she felt sure that they would be missing. His hair had been white. Naturally his eyebrows would be too. His hair looked as if it were very coarse.

And the eyebrows in captivity back in her Bible were so coarse that had they been scattered on the floor they would hardly have been taken for human hair.

Moreover the man was in hiding. That was plainly evident. And Captain Pete? Didn't that wily old fellow show by his actions that he was helping to conceal some one in the big house?

Renfro clutched his paper bag in which were the rabbits. Yes, indeed, he would watch Captain Pete. But Mary was not thinking much of watching Captain Pete. They must find some way to see that man's face. No use to knock. They would have to plan some better ruse than that. She would think about it over night, she assured Renfro, re-read some of her correspondence course in "detectiveness" and be ready to have a conference with him on the next day.

"Some plan, partner," Renfro slapped Mary boyishly on the back completely dislodging her hat. "You're a brick, a gold one, and a jeweled one and—"

"A plain chimney one," Mary laughed while she twisted and turned her hat until she felt

that from the way it set on her head that the red rose was either directly in front or behind. A cautious search with her fingers made her mind easy on that, and she continued her conversation. "All right, Hooch, only don't never call me a brick for a foundation. It'll make me think of that fence and my downfall. All the way to that house I was so frivolous like, that I kept humming over and over. 'How firm a foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord', and laughin' because I, one of the Saints, couldn't git over a wobbly log fence, and wonderin' what I would do should I strike a firm foundation in my path."

They had reached the mission, now, and the choir was in full force of rehearsal. The bass was leading much to Mary's disgust. She snorted derisively and assured Renfro that when she got in there they wouldn't ever hear that insurance agent, who put on airs, sing.

At the door when he turned to go home she suddenly clutched at his coat. "Oh, Hooch," she whispered, "I clean forgot to tell you something very disturbin' I read. When them detectives looked at them scratches on the window

they said right away they had been done by a knife and then they found two of them coarse hairs. They didn't think much of them, the paper says, but still they are keeping them. And" she pushed him down the steps, "that means we have got to work fast."

Renfro found that he was trembling when he reached the foot of the steps—not from fear of being apprehended himself but of some other person discovering the kidnapers before he could. His only hope lay in the fact that the detectives had all based their search on the idea that Helen Wier had been kidnaped by persons who would either soon demand a ransom or by some one who wanted to have revenge on Judge Wier.

And neither Captain Pete nor his brother could have that motive in mind he was sure. He had investigated some old newspapers at the Globe office that evening and found that Judge Wier had been a mere stripling of a lawyer when Captain Pete's brother had been found guilty of counterfeiting and been sent to prison. Also he had not had anything to do with the prosecution.

He looked back over his shoulder, and saw the light in the windows of Mary's church even down to the basement. It was all a brilliant blaze. "A fire!" He gasped and started to run back.

Then he remembered. Mary had said that the charitable women of the church were going to work there that night to fix Thanksgiving baskets for the poor. They were making clothes for them. The other members of the church would have to donate the food and clothing.

Renfro gave a sudden jump. It was followed by another, and then a wild Highland fling. "I have it, I have it, I have it!" he yelled out loud.

A door opened directly in front of him. An inquisitive head was thrust out, a fretful voice asked, "What's the matter?"

And Renfro fled.

Half way down the block he stopped to laugh. "But it was worth making some one think I was insane," he laughed. "And I'll do it, too."

Early in the morning he would go to the minister of the church which his mother, his father and himself attended. He would tell him about the turkeys. He would offer three of them to

the poor, which the church would feed at Thanksgiving time. There were many people in that wealthy church who bought The Globe on the street instead of being regular subscribers. He would add some of them to his list.

"I'll do it—I will," he whispered this time.

But his whisper was full of ardor. "And wait until next week when I see Morrison's face. Ten of those turkeys are mine."

Just then he decided to go into a little lunch room hardly bigger than the lunch wagons in the west part of town, and get himself something warm to drink. There was one near the corner at which the car stopped. He looked through the door, saw the steaming "hot dogs" on an iron grate and entered.

The place was deserted except for the old man doing the cooking and a dog lying close to his little stove. The big dog was a collie and a very suspicious creature for he barked at Renfro as he entered. The man quieted him with a hoarse growl, took Renfro's order and filled it all the time frowning sullenly as if he considered a customer an insult.

He was tall and thin and bent and broken.

Evidence of a hard life were written all over him. His shrewd eyes spoke volumes about bartering. Renfro was wondering about the methods he used when there sounded on the back door an imperative tapping and the man went back to answer it.

Renfro watched him swing some rabbits into view, heard him quarrel about the shots being in their bodies instead of their heads, and smiled when he paid the person who was selling the rabbits with a handful of small coins. "Seems to lower the price that way," he thought.

And then he listened closely. The restaurant man has said something about the thickets west of town being full of rabbits and that a fellow who had access to them ought to be a little cheaper on his rabbits to a poor restaurant man than was this old man.

With a careful, quiet movement he was off his stool, and had started toward the front door. But the big dog intercepted his progress, had given a series of growls and stood in a menacing position till the owner slammed the door and came to Renfro's rescue.

The man was half way down the street before

Renfro was to the front door. And it was evident he did not intend taking a car so Renfro skirted around a block and passed him farther down, face to face.

At least Renfro's face was toward the other's, whose visage was shaded by a heavy pair of goggles.

But Renfro knew one thing. The man was not Captain Pete. And he was almost sure of another. That he was the man whom he had met face to face the first time he had seen Lang Tammy. But of one thing he was uncertain. Mary had seen a stranger in the big house a short time before. Then how could he have gotten across the town on foot in such a short time?

CHAPTER XV.

A DEAL IN TURKEYS.

SATURDAY was almost over before Renfro got to see the Rev. Mr. Bottleman, who was the clergyman in charge of the church which he and his parents attended. He had made his first trip to the parsonage early in the morning, before he had time to tell Mary about the stranger at the little lunch room on the night before.

And Mr. Bottleman had been out making some early morning calls on the sick. But his wife, a very friendly woman giggled and blushed like a young girl, assured Renfro that he would be back at noon and urged him to come then as she always considered the time, during which a man was eating, the best time to make a request.

She and Renfro had been friends since Renfro's dog had ruined the garden of the deacon, whose wife criticized the parsonage lady for the length or rather the lack of length to her street costume. Though she didn't have any idea what sort of a request he was going to make of her minister husband she determined to help

obtain it if she could.

From there Renfro had gone direct to a meeting of Morrison's carriers. Morrison usually had meetings only on great occasions such as giving out Christmas presents or the bestowing of prizes won by his boys or for other events of that order, but this time he felt that one was necessary to stimulate all the carriers in his district to carry away Thanksgiving turkeys.

It was the first time Renfro had seen the boys who worked in his part of town together. They filled Morrison's room, Boy scouts in uniform, tall boys out of uniform, little ones in corduroy suits and fat ones in heavy overcoats. The boy next Renfro was a Freshman in high school and the son in a family of eight children, all the boys in which were then or had been newspaper carriers.

"It's just like joining the army," he informed Renfro. "Once it gets in your blood you have to enlist. And we kids had to work to pay our way thru high school."

Morrison began talking. He told them how nearly to the winning mark several carriers on other routes were. Then he gave the rating of the boys in his own section. Renfro smiled

when his name was read first on the list. Now if his Sunday idea worked out all right he was sure that he would move up miles ahead by Monday.

"Hooch Horn," Morrison beamed on Renfro, "has Old Grief, and he got every one of his subscribers out there on that route."

The boy who had carried the route in the spring laughed derisively. "Gettin' subscriptions out there," he said, "is as easy as eatin' pan cakes on a cold morning. But collecting the money for them is just the same as eatin' them same pancakes when it's hot in July."

Renfro stared at him but was silent. He knew that Morrison would tell him how many subscriptions had been paid in advance. And Morrison did. He had big hopes for Hooch he said.

After the talk Renfro noticed that the older carrier boys eyed him with respect. It was a new experience for him to be rated according to his own work and not just according to his father's reputation, and he liked it. None of the boys there knew whether his father was a financier or a butcher; but they all did know

that he was a successful route carrier for The Globe and that was what counted.

The meeting over, Renfro called up the parsonage again but the minister was still away. There was no use for him to come out there to wait, Mrs. Bottleman told him, for her husband had telephoned that he was going out to a country parishioner's home after some supplies for a poor family.

"He went with the doctor, and his car is pretty much out of order these cold days," she laughed, "so you just call from time to time today and I'll let you know when he comes."

Back at his home Renfro ate his dinner and talked a short time to Mary. The staff of detectives following a clue which they had obtained were leaving for another city, the name of which was a secret. Some of Judge Wier's enemies had been tracked there.

There had been no more letters from Helen, so they were sure that she was out of town and that these, the family had received, had been brought back to town before they were mailed to avoid suspicion. Mrs. Wier had given up hope of ever seeing her daughter again but the

Judge with his grim determination still believed that she would be found.

"And the guilty parties shall be punished," he ended his declaration sternly. Even his wife's entreaties and the detectives' advice to avoid threats could not influence him.

Mary considered this news good news. But as to the man who had been selling rabbits to the restaurant keeper the night before she didn't believe he would throw any light on their mystery. The town was full of low heavy set men. And did Hooch see his eyebrows?

Hooch had not. He had worn heavy goggles. But still Mary was skeptical. She had definitely arranged in her mind, following more research in her correspondence school books, that the guilty parties would be lodged in the haunted Hall house. Of course, she didn't expect Helen Wier to be found there. Like the detectives, she believed that the child had been spirited out of the city, but she knew positively that the Hall men knew something about the kidnaping, "Well, all about it," she added.

That afternoon, the minister still being an absent personage, Renfro canvassed his route

for new customers and got just three. "A third of a turkey, almost," he laughed to himself.

Saturady's paper was out early so he was thru delivering it by four-thirty. He made it a rule to collect in the mornings. Straight from Washington Street he went across the town to to the Methodist parsonage in which the Rev. Bottleman lived. And there he found that that gentleman had just returned.

His smile when he shook his hands with Renfro was encouraging. With spirits rising Renfro put forth a direct question, "Would you like to help get some turkeys for three poor families in your church?"

The minister didn't smile. "You bet!" he agreed boyishly.

Renfro plunged immediately into the story of the Globe's offer of a turkey for every ten new subscribers their carrier boys secured. "I've made up my mind to have six," his mouth closed in the firm decisive line Henry Horn's did when starting a business venture, "And I need some more subcribers."

"Yes," Mr. Bottleman raised his eyebrows.

"I want you to annouce my proposition to

your parishioners after church tomorrow morning. Tell them that the poor get the turkeys. I get the business. That's what I want."

"Sure I'll do it," a gleam of amusement crossed the minister's face but Renfro didn't see it. And immediately the pastor began talking.

"You stand at the little table just inside the outer door as the congregation leaves the church," he gave definite directions. "Exactly as I do, following a missionary sermon, and preceding the missionary collection. You'll get some new subscribers I'm sure."

Back home Renfro ate his supper and planned to have a quiet evening. But there came a complaint from the office. Mr. Bruce had given directions that each boy, on whose route there came any complaint of a missing paper, was to see that that paper was properly delivered.

And there were two missing on Old Grief.

Renfro brought his skates and with them over his shoulder made his way to the street. With the papers in his overcoat pocket he skated out to the two little cottages at whose doors he had left papers earlier in the evening. Either a neighbor's dog or a neighbor's boy he felt

sure had gotten the papers.

"Gee, I hope this doesn't last all winter," John Lehman, the carrier of the best route in town, met Renfro on Main Street with a whole stack of papers in his arms. "I think that the kidnapers must have decided to steal newspapers instead of lawyer's kids. I'm so dead tired I wont go to church in the morning," he complained.

Renfro was glad of that for John went to Dr. Bottleman's church. And the next morning as he sat in the pew next his mother he looked around and did not see a single Globe carrier whom he knew. He waited impatiently all thru the sermon for Dr. Bottleman's announcement about the turkey proposition. When it did come he felt that he was blushing to the roots of his hair and wondered why his mother did not put out her hand and say that he could not do that.

But his mother was amazed along with several other members over the peculiar announcement. Nor did she notice when he slipped out of the pew and took his stand at the church door.

He saw neither of his parents until near the end of the processional of people leaving the church. And then he was so excited over his good luck in having gotten enough subscriptions, lacking one, to have won the turkeys. He was counting the list when he happened to look up and see his parents.

His mother's face was fiery but his father was smiling. Gravely he took out his pocket book and counted out the money for a subscription. "Have it sent to Mary's mother," he said, "I heard her say the other day that she wished they could afford the paper at her home."

Renfro took the money, gravely counted it and then looked up at his father, his eyes twinkling, "Dad," he said boyishly, "You're the fellow who put the finishing touches on the flock. Your subscription makes me have the necessary sixty. The turkeys are mine!"

CHAPTER XVI.

BOY SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE.

TWENTY-FOUR hours passed and Mary Dugan knew nothing about the winning of the turkeys. On the way home from church Renfro had asked his father and mother not to mention his success to Mary. "Afraid she'll kick on cooking the whole lot?" Mr. Horn laughed.

Mrs. Horn stared at her husband with hateur. He was in admirable humor over the whole affair. The Rev. Mr. Bottleman had shook his hand after he and Renfro had had a little talk over the success of the scheme. "Another king of industry, Horn," the minister had laughed.

Renfro had touched his arm. "Will you have your three names ready for the charity turkeys?" he asked. "I'd like to deliver them in a few days."

"I'll get them to you tomorrow night," the minister promised. "I want to do some looking around to be sure that they are delivered at the homes where there are the most children." He put out his hands. "Come again, when you

have another deal like this one," he said gravely.

And then the Horn family had gone out to their car and started home. Mr. Horn, sensing the mood of his wife from the lofty elevation of her chin, did a monologue on the sermon; and Renfro was trying to picture Morrison's pride in the morning when he heard that six turkeys would go to one of his carriers.

When suddenly Mrs. Horn gave a moan and grabbed her husband's arm. "Oh," she began, "what if there happened to be a reporter at the church. We'll be the laughing stock of the town all because you gave your permission for him to carry that detestable route and—"

"We'll be the victims of three funerals tomorrow if you grab my arm like that again," Mr. Horn said hotly, "Didn't you see how close I ran to that telephone pole?"

Then Renfro reassured his mother. The Globe would not use the story without Mr. Bruce's permission, he knew. Also no other paper would carry one line of it because that would mean free advertising for the Globe. "And newspapers aren't run that way," he

ended.

But Mrs. Horn was not convinced.

However, she soon forgot her worries. A knot of neighbors on the corner caused Mr. Horn to stop his car. He found the group discussing new turns in the Wier kidnaping. The detectives in a town half way across the state had ordered the arrest of a man, one of the gangsters, who had been indicted in the election fraud case and had left the town the night Helen was kidnaped.

They would arrive in town that night. The man's actions had been mysterious for several days before the kidnaping, in fact enough so for the police to send word out to watch him. "But as usual with our police," said the doctor on the corner, who himself having been robbed during the fall, was vindictive, "no watching was done."

That afternoon Renfro called Morrison for news of the Wier kidnaping, verifying what news in regard to the story he had heard that morning. It seemed to be an assured fact that this man had been arrested and that he was being brought back tonight.

Renfro too heard stories about the scratched

window pane. But the workman who put in the new windows at the Wier house offered evidence which seemed to make all these no clues at all. Very seldom he said were a set of windows ever installed in a new home without some of them being scratched by the workmen.

Most of the work done involved the use of knives. And these scratches were knife made. The chief of detectives, hearing this had laughed and promptly put in his desk the two gray hairs he had been guarding since a short time before.

Monday morning papers told of the return of the man believed to have some knowledge of the crime and his incarceration in the city jail. Mrs. Wier's condition, according to the story, was improving. Another letter had come to the Wier home, this one sent from a nearby city, written in the child's handwriting, assuring her mother that she was well and comfortable.

On his way to school Renfro telephoned Morrison. And that executive had been very jubilant. "How did you do it?" he demanded,

"and are you sure all your subscriptions are acceptable?"

"Sure," Renfro laughed back, "I've got the money in advance."

Then came a conversation with Bruce, and Renfro was ordered to come around past the office that afternoon early enough to have his picture snapped with the prize turkeys. Renfro had laughed to himself, "mother will die," he imagined her horror when she saw the picture, "But I can't help it. Business is business, and mothers have to expect some publicity if their sons are successful."

At the office that afternoon he stood very straight while his picture was being made. The six turkeys were magnificent birds. The boys, who owned routes for several months, and those, who had been carriers for more than a year, were very envious. And also eager to hear how Renfro had secured his subscriptions.

Mr. Bruce called Renfro into his office, and to him and Morrison, Renfro told the story of his business deal with the minister, and of its success. Mr. Bruce had then held out his hand.

"Congratulations old man," he had beamed. "You're one of the fellows I need right at the post. There are going to be some vacancies in some dandy routes. You'll have first choice at any of them."

"I protest," Morrison was all dignity, "Mr. Bruce, Hooch belongs to my bunch. He can't be sent in any other district route manager's territory."

It was then Renfro spoke, "If you please, Morrison," he was quite in earnest, "I would like to keep Old Grief."

And both Morrison and Bruce were speechless.

A little later, Renfro decided to take his turkeys home before he carried his route. That would make him later and he would have a better chance of investigating his eyebrow mystery. And after he straightened his shoulders and thought to himself, "The turkeys are won and I've got to solve that mystery in the same way I won them."

It was Macauley who suggested that Renfro drive the turkeys home—Macauley, who had a twinkle in his eye and a rich brogue, both of

which should have made most people suspicious but they rarely did. He had lived on a farm in his youth. He had helped care for turkeys, "the most recreant birds in the category of farm animals," and he laughed boyishly, "and always they wandered away daily while I hunted them daily and drove them miles. All you need, Hooch, is two or three fellows to help you, and to remember this bit of advice. KEEP TO THE ALLEYS FOR FEAR YOU MIGHT FRIGHTEN THE LADIES."

Three boys started out to help Renfro drive his brood home—among them the little carrier whose route was next Renfro's and who had rushed into the office the minute he had heard that Old Grief had won Renfro six birds. Jimmy Noel called in a rush to be ready to offer first aid and have a chance to win more merit badges, and after him a little colored boy who had been playing in the alley back of the Globe office.

The birds trotted down the first stretch of alley in a beautiful manner and then they crossed the street with the same precision. The second alley would have been a quiet course had it not been for the washwoman who was carrying a

bundle of clothes toward the oncoming flock. Thinking these turkeys were runaway birds and scenting an easy way to get a Thanksgiving dinner she dropped her washing and started after the largest bird.

And then came the stampede. Jimmy, Renfro and Bill, the other route boy kept ofter the turkeys which perched on buildings, ran in all directions and made a medley of noises which could never be described. But the little colored boy took after the woman of his own race and after she had given up the chase of the turkey he kept up his pursuit, shouting at the top of his voice.

At the corner Jimmy sighted some other scouts starting on a five mile hike. He signaled them with all the authority of a patrol leader in his troop and they, being good scouts, joined in the chase. Two little girls who had wished for boyish adventure recognized this as a great opportunity and came to the throng.

Such chasing, such climbing, such squawking as followed. But before long the entire six were back in a group in the arms of six sturdy scouts. "One good turn today," they informed

Renfro, "Better let us help you get them home."

And Renfro agreed. At the next corner they were met by a colony of colored people, the old washwoman gesticulating and protesting, while the little chap who had pursued her was also talking vehemently. Renfro gasped at the bunch. It was their evident determination to accompany himself and the scouts to the Horn residence.

He raked his mind. And then he talked to Jimmy. "Mother's club is meeting tonight," he said. "If this bunch would follow me home well—"

And Jimmy, the general, was quick to size up the situation. "Give the kid a turkey," he suggested. "You can't cook them all, anyway, and he sure has run some. Besides he isn't a scout and doesn't have to do a good turn for us other fellows."

So Renfro handed the little colored chap a turkey. And to the amazement the little colored boy and the big colored woman whom he had been pursuing, straightway made up all their differences and went away carrying the turkey between them.

"Well, Jimmy," he laughed, "I'll change my mind. He's a good scout after all."

CHAPTER XVII.

RENFRO FINDS THE MYSTERY MAN.

LIKE a patrol of victorious soldiers, the Boy Scouts in khaki, with the big turkeys perched on their shoulders, entered the Hall domain from the alley entrance. Jimmy's decisive "Halt!" brought them all to attention —all except the turkey, on the head of which was the responsibility for the alley episode, and he flapped his wings and started all the other turkeys to doing likewise.

There was no law in all the list of the manual which told how to control a recreant turkey. So Jimmy forgot his dignity as a patrol leader and clutched one of the birds by the neck. She screamed no longer. But her big wings flapped, her body twisted, and even her tail seemed to go into convlusions.

Convulsions which caught Mary Dugan's attention as she passed by the window with a bowl of thousand island dressing in process of completion for the salad for the Hyacinth Reading Club now in session in the Horn library. The bowl went into the kitchen table, and Mary

Dugan out thru the back door, across the porch, and right into the midst of the group.

"The saints be praised!" Mary Dugan forgot what she called "The Horn Decorum" and reverted to her own home ways. "And now that you've surprised me by winnin' 'em all on a Monday here you're goin' to choke 'em to death before I can have the pick of the one I want to cook."

She flew to the big garage door, threw it open, and gave stenatorian orders, "Here,—put 'em in here—let'em roost in peace till I've finished my supper. Then I mix 'em a bit of dough for refreshment followin' a soldier party."

She bowed to the boy scouts and opened the rear gate for their departure as soon as the turkeys were inside the garage and the big door swung shut again. Her gesture was imperative. With Jimmy hastening them on they did not mark time but did "double quick" steps down the town's best alley.

Then Mary Dugan looked at Renfro, "There be only five," she accused him. "You don't mean to tell me all them boys let a turkey get loose."

"No, Mary," Renfro was impatient. "It was really a salvage article in a worth while conflict. But I'll tell you all about it and how I happened to get them so soon and everything—new clues and all," he promised, "only I'm late as the dickens with my route now and there'll be a dozen complaints and I have to go."

Now whatever else could be said of Mary Dugan the fact remained that she was always a good scout and without another question she swung open the alley gate once more, watched Renfro through it and shouted down the alley after him. "There be three kinds of cake and striped ice cream for the reading club. I'll save all kinds for you."

Again Renfro chose an alley route through town. It was the quickest way to reach Washington Street and the drug store. Once there he saw something unusual. All the packages of papers except his own were gone. Swish! That was the sound of tearing the paper which bound them. Clash! They were going into his bag. And clatter—he was off down the street to the front porch of his first customer.

Up one street, around a corner into another,

and back and forth on it he went. It was dark, the thaw predicted by the weather man had set in early in the afternoon, and there were places where it was so slippery from the melting ice that he had to walk very slowly and carefully. He did not complain. Old Grief had become the first rung of his ladder to success. And a mighty good rung she had been.

At the corner, nearing the Wier house, Renfro brushed against a stooped, old woman of the type usually seen around pawn shops and cheap restaurants. She was carrying a lot of bundles, but it was not these Renfro noticed. Around her neck with both ends flapping free and showing plainly in the glow from the light in the middle of the corner intersection was the peculiar looking scarf the old man whom he had passed outside the sandwich shop last Friday night had worn.

"Humph!" Renfro laughed at his own exclamation days later. But he was too amazed then to say anything else. It was possible for two people to have as odd scarfs as were these, but hardly possible he thought. And then—well then, he decided to do a little investigating.

He sauntered a little farther down the street, stepped behind a tree and watched the old woman journey slowly down Washington street —still more slowly, and still more slowly, but always in the same direction,—the one taken by everyone of the queer looking individuals who journeyed out to the big old house, which everyone said was haunted—everyone except Captain Pete who declared that claim all tom-foolishness.

Renfro looked back to his own surroundings. He was directly across the street from Judge Wier's house. The blinds were drawn to the bottoms of the windows. The afternoon papers had said that Mrs. Wier was very despondent again. There had been no letter from Helen that day. She had declared that she knew the child was dead and wished that she too would die.

The man in the county jail had been questioned and sweated, and sweated and questioned, but still stuck to his original statement that he knew nothing about the kidnaping. Though the chief of police declared that it was a foolish waste of time the detectives were off on the

trail of his confederates.

"And Helen's not two miles from this very spot," Renfro declared vehemently to himself. "And perhaps she is suffering though she wrote that she wasn't. Well, I'm going out to the shack and the big house tonight and I'm not going to come home until I know something much more definite than anything I've seen up to this time."

He half ran to finish the remaining few houses on his route, then hurried down the road, crashed across the orchard and down to Captain Pete's little cabin. Once he heard a queer suspicious noise in the undergrowth just beyond the orchard, but he felt sure it was Lang Tammy come to jump on him and play a game of tug-of-war with his paper bag.

Near the cabin he stopped a minute to listen. He looked around the corner. Everything was quiet. He stopped, listened intently and then heard voices. Two men, talking in rather loud tones as if they were having an argument. Something sounded like the thwack of a fist on a table and then Renfro walked to the cabin door.

He knocked with a decisive, determined air. Captain Pete called out, "Who is there?"

But Renfro answered with another knock, more determined than the first. He heard the growl of a dog and then stopped as if some one had choked the creature into silence. And then he did a veritable tattoo of knocks on the big, heavy door.

And stamping angrily across the floor Captain Pete came to open it. The heavy door jerked on its hinges with the force of an angry host and Captain Pete's grizzled face seemed to fill the door way but not quite—

For back in the shadow of the room sat a man, stooped over something—a man who was heavy set and short and who looked exactly like the stranger, whose shadow Renfro had seen so often on the curtain of the window at the big house across the deserted orchard and lane of Captain Pete's domain, again on the coming out of the back of the restaurant stand and several times on Washington Street.

"I told ye I didn't want the paper," Captain Pete growled.

Then Renfro did the thing which surprised

Captain Pete too much for him to realize in time to object to what he was doing. He stepped into the room, around the table and up to the stooped, old man, "Would you like to have a sample copy of The Globe?" he asked.

The question, the boy so near him and everything, seemed to frighten the old man out of his self possession. He shifted his feet, shook his head and then raised it enough so that Renfro could see his eyes, and—

ABOVE THEM THE OTHER HALF OF THE MISSING EYEBROWS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THREE MEN IN THE PLOT.

ONE instant Renfro stood staring—the next he gave a quick jump. For, with a threatening growl the heavy old man had sprung forward, his fist raised menacingly. Past Captain Pete out thru the open door Renfro jumped and ran together.

Behind him he heard the old man swearing, heard a loud growl, a series of barks, imperative orders "Get him, Tam," and ran behind the first shelter which offered itself—a low old ash hopper, which had stood near the cabin since pioneer days.

He was not afraid of the big airedale dog but he did have an idea that the old man—might shoot if he happened to be able to get hold of any of the arms Captain Pete kept hanging on the wall, all loaded as he had told Renfro, ready for the first rabbit which would cross his track.

The big airedale shot around the ash hopper. Renfro dropped on his knees to be out of sight. But against Renfro he only sniffed, rubbed his head over his rough mackinaw and whined like

a happy child over the joy of finding a playmate once more.

From the open door came sounds of quarreling. Renfro listened, heard Captain Pete tell the other man to call his dog back, that the boy was a friend of his and was not to be harmed.

"But ye warned me agin' him yourself," the other growled.

"Call yer dog back!" Captain Pete was determined.

"I aint," the other's voice was dogged.

"Then I'll—" there was a break in Captain Pete's speech, and Renfro raised on his knees so that he could see the inside of the cabin. Captain Pete was reaching for one of his guns. The other man slouched toward the door and called gruffly. "Lang Tammy, come here,—come here!"

But Captain Pete still held his gun. And Renfro, fearing violence on Captain Pete's part, softly commanded Lang Tammy to go back into the house. With dragging feet and hanging tail the big dog obeyed his command. Once inside the door, the dog gave a yelp of pain. Renfro rose angrily to his feet but the big door

was swung shut.

"Well, I'll not bring any more papers here without observing the rule of preparedness first," he declared as he crouched close to the fence and worked his way back to the lane again.

He talked to himself all the way. "And one sure thing, Lang Tammy's my friend. He even deserts his master for me. But no wonder the way he yelped when he went back into the cabin. Poor doggie."

At the fence he stopped. Yes, there across the deserted orchard in the lower west window of the big house was a dim light, and moving back and forth across the blind a dim shape. Some one was in the deserted house.

Two men in Captain Pete's shack! That was the Captain and his brother, Renfro had felt sure of that. But there was another in the big house. "There was a woman," he remembered the old women who had carried the supplies and worn the scarf.

Well, he would cross to the house, peep in the window and make sure that it was she. It might—

He stopped—it might be Helen Wier shut in

that little room, left alone in the big house while her captor visited at the cabin.

But—he shook his head. That wasn't probable. They would be afraid she might escape. It must be the old woman whom he had passed back on Washington Street. He would make sure.

Cautiously, he worked his way across the orchard, around the house, close to the west window, and with his face as near the window as he dared place it. But hardly had he gotten it there until the light went out and the noise of footsteps told him that the person inside had gone across into the other room.

With a joyous exclamation Renfro found the peep holes, which he had cut out a few nights before with his knife. Carefully, he put his eyes to the two holes, stared thru them, waited a long time, and then his watch was rewarded.

For with great deliberation an old man, the exact counterpart of Captain Pete carried a lamp to the little table, spent much effort in adjusting it, brought to the table some sort of a little melting pot, under which he lighted a fire and then moved away again.

Renfro remembered the stories he had heard about Captain Pete's brother being a counterfeiter. Here he was, evidently getting ready to ply his counterfeiting trade again. The little melting pot, and array of instruments he was collecting and bringing to the table. The lamp under the melting pot burned dully. The old man tested the something in it, shook his head, indicating that everything was all right and went away again.

When he returned he carried a large tea kettle, which he proceeded to settle on his knees. Then with the soldering he took from the pot on a long soldering iron he began to mend a hole in its side near the spout.

It was a relieved but disappointed laugh Renfro gave. The old man was doing the most ordinary thing in the world—the old man who looked so much like Captain Pete that no one could doubt their relationship.

Slowly Renfro journeyed down the lane toward the road, Washington Avenue and home again. The old lady had not been in evidence again. The old man in the house was a simple old soul whose part in the crime if he had any

was of an unsuspecting accessory.

Again, no doubt Captain Pete knew much, though he might have been innocent of any part of it. But the man with the missing eyebrows? Yes, indeed he was the fellow, and Renfro knew that it was up to him to move quickly and with well thought plans if he got him before he escaped.

He rode home on the car. He was so hungry that he felt that his ribs were caving into his stomach. With home in sight his spirits began to soar. Mary was sure to have him a good warm supper and a good cold dessert to top it off—Mary would be ready to listen to all his adventures and to pat him on the back and urge him to greater effort. Mary was—

And then the light outside the garage door went on and Mary was out there with Renfro's father gesticulating, talking in loud tones, protesting against his opening the door any wider and trying to command and explain at the same time. Renfro grasped the situation in a minute. He rushed to Mary's aid.

"Don't open it wide, Dad, or they'll all come out," he begged. "My prize turkeys you know.

They are all in the garage but the one I had to give the colored boy for chasing the old woman who would have stolen it anyway—"

"But I have to have my car," Mr. Horn was impatient. "And besides the garage is no place for these infernal birds anyway. Your mother had no better judgement than to tell all those women I would take them home in the car and I want it in a hurry before the lodge meeting is over."

He motioned Mary to one side and Renfro to the other. "Can't you two keep them in the corner while I drive out." he began.

His hand reached the switch. A button was pressed and the garage was flooded with light. And there on the top of the big Marmon sat a sleepy red and bronze and black mixture of feathers and skin—the largest of Renfro's prize turkeys. Another was on the hood, the third on the gasoline tank, the fourth on a wheel. The fifth was not in evidence.

Not until he stepped in front of the car did Mr. Horn discover the whereabout of the fifth turkey. Silently and with a gesture which not only accused but did so vehemently, he pointed

through the windshield. There on the steering wheel, as if guarding the wheel of state, sat the fifth of the big birds.

"Who ever heard of putting turkeys in the garage?" he began, "You don't seem to have any sense as to the proper way of doing things. Your mother—"

"Mister Horn," Mary was the sly, strategist again, "Mrs. Horn's a waitin' in there for this machine to be takin' her company home. She's got the head ache and you know—"

With rapidity then, the work of getting the turkeys into the corner huddled together and Mary's guarding them, was finished. Mr. Horn backed the machine out. Mary and Renfro followed him and the door was closed.

Outside Mr. Horn's good humor returned. Mrs. Willis, the wittiest woman in the community, he often said and the wife of his best friend was on the porch. Before either Mary or Renfro realized what he was doing Mr. Horn had her to the garage, had showed her the turkeys in the corner, told her of the sight which had greeted him when he had opened the door and was laughing about the surprise he had received

at the church the day before.

Then it was impossible to keep Mrs. Willis out of the living room where she retold the story to the other members of the Hyacinth Club and led in the laughter which followed. She declared that she was bowed down with admiration for Renfro and wanted him brought before her. So out of the kitchen he was half dragged, the napkin Mary had fastened around his neck still there and the best of his supper back on the table melting.

But when they were thru feteing him and praising him he went back to it, not the least minding the terrible condition in which it then was. For he really believed that his mother, excited by the admiration of the other women, had become proud of him.

"Mary Dugan," he interrupted Mary who was out of sorts over the large pile of unwashed dishes before her. "Now if you were a fellow whose praise would you rather have—the fellows or your mother's?"

And Mary being out of patience with all mothers who belonged to Hyacinth Club and made extra work for the "hired help" replied with alacrity, "Why the fellows, of course."

CHAPTER XIX

RENFRO IS KIDNAPED.

RENFRO'S next question brought Mary Dugan to her feet. "Were there any Complaint calls in?" he asked. "Did Morrison or any one call up from the office or—"

"Hooch," Mary was herself again in spite of her weariness, in spite of the pile of dishes, and the excitement thru which she had passed. "There were several calls for you and all from the office, and I told them a plenty too, how you'd won the turkeys and had to be allowed to bring them home in peace, and then when they just kept a callin' I just took the receiver and left it off the hook without paying any attention to the buzzer till your maw heard and came and put it on the hook."

"But that settled them," Mary's voice was full of pride. "For none of them called again."

"Oh, well they all got their papers all right—even Captain Pete," Renfro's voice was weary. "But I do hate to have a lot of complaints go into the office like must have gone in tonight."

There were two people doing the work. Renfro knew that, because one tied his feet while the other bound his hands. They worked in the hedge.

Then he remembered something else. "Did the minister send the addresses where he wanted the turkeys delivered?"

Mary had to hear the story of the way the turkeys had been won so early in the game. When Renfro told her that a great deal of credit was due her, that her going to choir practice Friday night made him think of the help of the church, she beamed at him.

And then she told him of some new plans she had made for working together on the kidnaping mystery. The Hyacinth Reading Club with its extra cooking had taken all of her time that day. Captain Pete had gone next door with rabbits. The cook there had told her of his arrival and his departure with more than a half dozen of the same.

"Now allus before he's come here when he had even a rabbit left," Mary was convinced. "So I know he is suspicious of us."

Renfro was thinking of the experiences he had had that night, and was making decisions. No, he wouldn't tell Mary about them yet. He wanted to be sure the man at Captain Pete's was his man; he wanted to see him either in daylight or

in a light which would show his eyebrows up a little better. He wanted to be sure they matched with the missing parts.

And then he rose and went to his room. Very slowly he undressed, waited until it was quiet below, slipped down stairs and to the drawer in the kitchen cupboard, in which Mary kept her Bible. Then he took out the two packages containing the missing eyebrows.

Yes, it would be better for him to carry them for a few days. He might meet the man on the street, or in a store and after seeing him while memory was still strong, he wanted to compare with it the parts of the eyebrows which he had taken from the windows of Judge Wier's home.

He turned his trousers pockets inside out, then those of his coat, surveyed the motley collection in each, replaced the different articles in them and shook his head. His eyebrows would not be safe in such a lot of things as these. He looked around the room and then he saw his cap.

With a bound he had it in his hand. The band inside was deep and strong and loose—all just the way he wanted it to be for a good

hiding place. He knew that telegraph messenger boys carried messages in their caps. With great care he sewed an envelope inside that band in which he had sealed the two smaller packages.

Before he went to bed that night he did several little things he had wanted to do for a long time—wrote a letter to a chum in another town, counted up his balance in the bank and made out his Christmas shopping list. He even straightened his dresser, made a memorandum about delivering the charity turkeys, went to the window, and looked out at the neighborhood for a time. He felt queer—neither elated nor depressed, but quite as if a different sort of an experience from any he had known, loomed before him.

He was glad they had taken his picture at the office. If anything happened to him—

He laughed boyishly. If he did happen to find the place where Helen Wier was being kept then they too would be glad they had his picture. That happy thought sent him to bed and to sleep so fast that it was quite late when he awoke.

The day seemed to rush by. His mind was on one thing though he heard of many others. His fame in winning the turkeys had spread thru Grant high school, thanks to Jimmy Noel and his crew of helpers. The teachers congratulated him; the boys praised him, and some of the girls he knew best were inclined to try to twit him.

But he heardly heard them. Before him there loomed the big house in which the old man had mended the tea kettle, the cabin in which Captain Pete and his strange guest had quarreled, and the old woman, whose wearing the scarf had made her have some connection with the mystery. And always each picture showed to him the fierce, cruel face the old man assumed when his anger was aroused.

He was early on his route that night and delivered all his papers with precision. Directly after supper he was going to tell Mary the whole story and see if she would go with him to the cabin and big house once more. That was best he was sure.

But he didn't get to tell Mary. While he was at the supper table there was a call from the of-

fice for him—a complaint from on his route. He took the number, went back to the table to finish his dessert and to listen to his mother give a monologue on the dangers of carrying a paper route.

Carrying complaints on such nights as this was sure to give him pneumonia some time she argued. People were careless with their papers. No doubt the boys often left them at these complainers homes and then they—

Renfro started at her charge. Why he remembered now that he had left a paper at that number they had given him at the office. That was the number of the house where the little crippled girl sat at the window and watched for him—a long, low house without any paint and with a tin roof on the front porch, which roof was about in the same condition as that of the big house at which the mystery was deepening.

He went back to the telephone, called the office, and asked for the number again. He might have heard wrong he thought. Exactly the same number was given him again. He wanted to tell the manager he remembered leaving the

paper there. The little crippled girl had herself opened the window that evening for it, but he knew that an argument would only make his mother more uneasy, more set against his continuing with Old Grief.

Now that he had been successful she declared he should have a better route, his own home or one in the business part of town. If once she conferred with Mr. Bruce who had offered him such a route, Renfro knew it would be very hard for him to continue with Old Grief.

"And," he told himself, "I don't want to leave there until I have the circulation worked up to 80% of the number of residents on that route."

He stepped out into the dark street, fumbled his way around the house to the side porch where his bicycle had been left, but did not take it. There was a puncture in the front tire and it was flat. He walked to the corner and here took a car. Car fare was a minor consideration now that he needed time. He would hurry back, tell Mary about the story and perhaps then when she had all her work out of the way she would go scouting with him.

He dropped off the car at the nearest corner, and with him the paper under his arm scurried down the street. Past the big house, next door to the little one he hurried, and then in sight of the one with the tin roof and the little crippled girl. His feet suddenly slipped on something which felt like a carpet of banana skins; down he went clutching at a hedge to break his fall, and then someone clutched him.

Something strong—it felt like a band of leather was passed over his mouth. Both of his hands were caught behind him and a sharp thong passed around his legs. But his eyes were left free. As they tied his hands behind his back he wondered why he had not been blindfolded. And a little later he learned.

There were two people doing the work. Renfro knew that,—because one tied his feet while the other bound his hands. They worked in the hedge.

Renfro wondered then why the city council had allowed all the tall hedges to stand in this old part of the town. Had they never seen the possibilities they offered to thieves and people like these? Evidently these men had realized

them fully, for in giving a number from which to send a complaint they had chosen one next door to one of these hedges.

And then he realized that one of his captors was a woman. She moved in front of him and her skirts swished against his knees. That discovery made him more furious than ever. He twisted his body, shoved with his shoulders, and pushed against her with all his might. The next minute he was firmly lifted by the other captor, from whose strength he knew was a man, carried out into the street and deposited on a small wagon there.

CHAPTER XX.

HIDDEN IN THE CAVE.

HE WAS placed on the floor of the wagon, face downward. As the wagon started it went with a jolt which thrust his face against a rough board and cut his nose and cheek. More jerks did a series of bruises on his forehead, his chin and his nose. By almost superhuman effort he managed to roll over on his side and then on his back.

By the time this was accomplished they had traveled down a dark road quite a distance. It was so dark Renfro could not see three feet ahead of his face at first. But his eyes soon got accustomed to the darkness. And little by little, he began to recognize the tops of the trees and by the feeling of surroundings to know that they were on the road which ran off East Washington.

Insinct, more than anything else, told him that they turned off at the second lane of the first on the Hall place. The first one was only used by pedestrians. The second was for wagons, but it had been used so little that it

was in a horrible condition. The jolting sensation was terrible. Renfro realized that his face would have been cut beyond recognition had he not managed to turn over.

They jolted close to trees, through a lot of low underbrush which ground against the wheels of the wagon and across a little bridge. The limbs on one low hanging tree struck his face and scratched it still more.

The silence, which the couple had maintained in town and along the road, was now broken. The old woman, whose voice was almost as gruff as her companion's complained of the way he drove. He in turn offered to share the privilege with her if she so desired to seize it.

An imperative "whoa" stopped the horse, suddenly. The man clambered out, thrashed around the wagon, seemed to be tugging at a door. A squeaking of rustry hinges followed his efforts, and he called out gruffly. "Drive on in Maggie, and remember the log on the east side. You hit it the last time."

Renfro hoped that Maggie would not hit it this time. He held breath while the wagon jolted thru the door into a dark, dilapidated

building which was full of moldy odors. And there the horse stopped. He had to lie still while they unhitched the horse, all done in the darkness. They discussed the harness which seemed to be needing repairs from what they said.

The old man told Maggie to get some food at a bin, but she replied that she couldn't find it by just feeling around. She wanted to light the lantern but he wouldn't allow her. A trifle crossly she refused to even try to help farther. And he said surlily. "If you had them 15 years in the darkness I did, you'd be able to find anything by feel."

After that she was more patient and seemed to help all she could with the finishing of the feeding. She came with the old man to the wagon, and with him while he took out a knite and cut the strap which tied his legs.

"You walk with me, just as I tell you, or you'll know what you'll get" the man's surly voice was charged with a threat which Renfro knew he would not hesitate to keep.

So he meekly followed his directions and walked between the two of them. The old wom-

an who seemed to have a more human disposition than the man, helped Renfro along by holding his arm. They went across decaying vegetable matter, through a door, close to a manger, and then into another room, smaller and close and possessing much more moldy odors than had the others.

There the old man lifted some sort of a door in the side of what seemed to be a banked part of the barn and they all stepped into a place so dark that Renfro could not see at all. While the old woman closed the door, her companion lighted a lantern.

For several minutes the light, though it was dim, blinded Renfro. Then his eyes gradually became accustomed to the light, and saw that they were in a narrow passage way. A few feet along it, and they came to some steps. They went down them—down, down, down, into an opening which seemed to be a cave. And there Renfro with his hands tied, and his mouth still bandaged was thrust into another and darker place and the door, which had been opened to allow him being pushed through, was shut again.

His first sensation was that he was on solid ground. Then his feet seemed to give away under him and he fell heavily, his head striking something sharp and hard. A quick pain, worse than any he had felt during the short ride, and then Renfro drifted into unconsciousness.

When he came to, it seemed that hours had passed, but it had really been only a period of some twenty minutes. He was lying on a pallet of mouldy smelling rugs and comforters. They were full of hard knots which sent shooting pains through his bruised body.

The room was not entirely dark now. There was a dim light and Renfro turned a little onto his side, saw that it came from a coal oil lantern, which emitted much more bad smelling smoke than it did light.

The bandage had been taken from his mouth. But the stout cords were still on his wrists, and others had again been tied around his ankles. They were tied in such a manner that if he lay perfectly still they were comfortable, but if he twisted or attempted to move, they cut into his flesh like circular knives.

But in spite of the pain caused by his moving,

Renfro managed to twist himself until he could see the nature of the room in which he was imprisoned. It was cold and damp and mouldy. Odors like those coming from a musty cellar, in which vegetables had long been stored, were strong around him.

There was some one in the room but Renfro could not see who it was. Heavy, rapid breathing behind him—in the direction he felt sure was the door tru which he had been thrown—proved that. He watched directly above him and to the side of the room he was facing.

And after a little looking he realized that it wasn't a room at all but a cave in which he was a captive. The rough jagged wall and ceiling were of rock, from which hung stalactites now stained and discolored by the rain and smoke of fires, which had been kept burning in a rusty coal oil stove.

There was a fire in the stove now, and Renfro was getting some heat from it. Besides it and the pallet, on which he was lying, Renfro could see no other furniture in the room. The lantern was flat on the floor.

Renfro shivered. He was cold to the marrow

of his bones. He shivered again and then a long, hard sneeze came out of his nose and throat. It was followed by another of the same, and then a whole series.

The person behind him stirred and came around the pallet until Renfro could see her—a swarthy, heavy set woman with a sour, disappointed visage and stooped, weary shoulders. Over her head she wore the odd colored scarf Renfro had seen twice on the street—first outside the little hot dog restaurant and next on East Washington Street.

She looked down at Renfro and he saw that her eyes were not half as hard and sour looking as her face. Her lips drawn in a straight line seemed to relax a little in their severity while she looked. And then she opened them and asked one short word, "Cold?"

"Yes, Ma'am," Renfro sneezed again.

With her free hand, the other was holding something under the scarf, she pulled the coal oil stove closer to his pallet and then she opened a door, slipped through it and closed it after her, and Renfro was left alone—but not for long. When the door opened again, it was the old man

who entered this time, a heavy, horse blanket in his arms.

On his head was the hunting cap with the sharp, low hanging bill. He spread the blanket over Renfro, gruffly asked him if he wanted something to eat and, after receiving a negative answer, squatted on the floor and looked close at the boy.

And Renfro looked back at him. There was instant recognition on the part of both, the old man who had been in Captain Pete's cabin and the boy who had burst in and handed him a sample copy of the Globe.

For quite a time they stared at each other and then the old man realized that his attempts to frighten Renfro had failed. He gave a short chuckle, which was more disagreeable than anything else, and then jerked off his cap.

And in the dim light to which Renfro's eyes had grown accustomed, was plainly visible the remainder of the eyebrows, half of each of which had been left sticking to Judge Wier's frozen window pane.

CHAPTER XXI.

HELEN WEIR IS FOUND.

THE old man's first words came in the form of a question. "Where are the rest of 'em?"

Renfro did not attempt to answer. To force an issue the old fellow was tempted to use gruffness but a look deep into Renfro's steely blue eyes told him that would be a waste of time. The boy couldn't be frightened into telling anything. Better treat him as he would a man.

"You scraped them off the window pane?"

This time Renfro answered, "Yes."

"I knew some one had when I read the newspaper about the knife scratches," the old fellow was talking like a human being, and not in the gruff disagreeable tone he had used up to this time. To be exact he seemed to be getting some pleasure out of talking to some one who had recently come from town and who knew the town's version of the kidnaping affair.

"And I knew it was you," the talker was measuring wits with Renfro, "as soon as I saw

you staring at me, out at that hot dog shop.''

His voice was triumphant. He rose from his half sitting, half kneeling posture and came over to Renfro. Turning him over roughly he went into his pockets, pulled out all of the contents, and carried them to the lantern. He was so busy examining them, that he could not see either the look of elation on Renfro's face, followed by one of apprehension toward his cap which was on the floor not far from his pallet.

With a surge of joy Renfro realized that it was muddy and dilapidated and torn. In that condition it would not receive any attention. No, the hiding place of the missing eyebrows was safe.

The fact that his search was unsuccessful made the old man quite angry. He threw the things he had taken out of Renfro's pockets to the floor, and came back to the boy. ''You didn't destroy them.'' There was no question but just a simple statement.

Renfro was silent. ''Well you'll tell me where they are and I'm goin' to git them tomorrow.''

Again silence. For some reason or other the old man did not seem to care to argue. He mere-

ly stared at Renfro, curiosity keen in his deep eyes. And was it imagination or did Renfro actually see a gleam of admiration in them as he stood and stared?

The door opened and the old woman's voice, now weary and fretful, put forth a question, "Does he want anything to eat, Bart?"

Renfro answered for himself—a curteous "No, ma'am—I thank you."

The same voice with its touch of queerness mumbled something about it bein' late, and she was sleepy, and for Bart to come out and leave the boy alone. Then Bart threw another cover on Renfro, took the coal oil stove in one hand, the lantern in the other and followed her through the door.

And Renfro was left in black darkness. The cover on him warmed him and he began to feel drowsy. He was too tired to wonder what the folks were doing at home now that it was time for him to be missed, or to regret the fact that he had not taken time to tell Mary of the find he had made in Captain Pete's cabin the night before.

He didn't wonder whether or not they would

start a seach for him. He was thinking of his route. Who would Morrison send out tomorrow to carry it for him? And would he find his list of new customers? And would they remember to take the three charity turkeys to the parsonage and—

There was a sharp bark in the next room. Renfro's heart surged with joy. He was not alone in the cave. He had a friend as a fellow prisoner. That bark came from Lang Tammy. And after it a girlish voice said sharply, "Can't you see Tammy's half starved to death? He wants milk—don't you, Tammy?"

And Renfro twisted until the throngs cut down into his flesh. That voice belonged to no one else but Helen Wier. She was in the cave too—just on the other side of the partition from Renfro.

At exactly the same time Judge Wier and Henry Horn were in council with the detectives at the police station. After Renfro had gone an hour from the Horn home a search had been instituted for him. Inquiry at the Globe office had failed to give them any evidence except the number of the house from which the complaint

had been sent.

A hurried trip out there and Mr. Horn and Morrison, who had come to his aid in looking for Renfro, discovered that the complaint call had been cleverly faked. Their suspicions were fully established. But still they did not give up hope. They called up all the homes of Renfro's friends, they had both the house and office of the Globe ready to send out relief calls if Renfro should happen to appear.

But hours passed, and there came to the two men no news. And then they had gone to the police station. Judge Wier was summoned and the two fathers went into close conference.

They, with the detectives, decided that for the sake of their search, after both Helen and Renfro, that it was best not to let the town know of Renfro's disappearance until evening—not even Mrs. Horn. The detectives wanted a chance to start a well organized search.

Early attempts to hunt Helen had been hindered by the crowd of people who had collected as soon as the news of her kidnaping had spread. Scores of foot tracks around the fateful house, all made by the curious persons, had

made it impossible for footprints to furnish a clue.

Cleverly Mr. Horn concocted a story for his wife about Renfro's going home with Morrison to do some extra work, early in the morning. When he told her about it she was very much out of humor and condemned paper routes in biting language.

"If she only knew the truth," Mr. Horn thought to himself and trembled. Some time the next day she would know the truth.

Mary Dugan, dead tired, heard the story and believed it without a qualm. She was sorry Renfro had to do the extra work. That meant just one more day for her to feed the turkeys, which he had said belonged to the church.

Morrison in turn had gone out to the Bruce home, and Bruce, after hearing the story, had gone straight to the city editor. Together they mapped out the course they would follow. Their noon edition would contain a story of the kidnaping—that would be their scoop, and early in the afternon they would send more detectives to help the local ones in the search.

Then Bruce and Morrison departed to their

individual homes and went to bed.

But neither Henry Horn nor Mary Dugan slept much that night. The detectives had assured Mr. Horn that they would soon find Renfro, that his kidnaping had given them definite proof that Helen Wier had been taken by local criminals. They would start an investigation from a new angle.

In the morning, of course, he would not go to work, just seemingly do that, so as not to disturb his wife. He would show those kidnapers that he was not a slow man to deal with like Judge Wier had been. He would prove to them they couldn't—

And directly above them Mary Dugan had hunted her Bible, read her Golden Text for next Sunday and was fumbling with the family pictures. And then she remembered the missing eyebrows. She opened the book at page 222, the one next to which she had put them.

And then she fell back with a low cry. The packages were gone. There was not even one white hair left.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LIGHTS ARE REVEALED.

MERLE RIKER carried the names of his six new subscribers to Morrison's office only to discover that Morrison was out. Wearily he sat down into the big chair to wait. He had accomplished what had seemed to him impossible a few days before. And he wanted Morrison's approval. And after that he wanted Renfro Horn's.

"He taught me how to do it," Merle had told Jimmie Noel on his way to the office. "Renfro Horn is a good sport."

"He's a good scout," Jimmie added soberly, "And that reminds me. I haven't seen Renfro all day. Let's go out there tonight and have a talk with him."

Merle promised. "My mother doesn't care for me being out at nights when I'm with a boy like Renfro Horn," he explained. "Meet at the corner drug store?"

Jimmie had agreed to that meeting place. Just as soon as Morrison came, Merle decided he would rush home, announce to the Riker family

they had a Thanksgiving turkey, eat a hurried supper and come back to the meeting place and then go to the Horn home.

But Morrisson didn't come. The clock struck six-thirty, seven, and then Merle rose. He went straight to the corner drug store, met Jimmie, and took him home with him. So Jimmie heard Merle's announcement about the Thanksgiving turkey and witnessed the joy it created. And as soon as Merle had eaten his supper they started back to the Horn residence.

But there they faced another dissappointment. Mary Dugan told them Renfro wasn't home, was still out on his route and that they could walk out to meet him if they wanted to see him.

"She isn't cross usually," Jimmie volunteered. "But she's tired out or something. Usually it's as Hooch says, 'Mary Dugan is the best scout of them all.' "

Together the two boys walked out toward East Washington Street, but though they watched every corner and every car they didn't see Renfro. "Might as well give it up," Merle was disappointed, "and go home. I'll tell

him in the morning."

"We're near the Globe office," Jimmie offered. "We might go past and stop in to see if Morrison's back. You'd like to tell him, if he's there—wouldn't you?"

They went to the carrier's room, found it empty but the door to Morrison's was ajar. Jimmie started toward it and stopped, his attention suddenly riveted by voices he heard. "But his mother must not know." It was Mr. Horn talking.

He recognized Bruce answering. Morrison too chimed in. And little by little Jimmie learned the whole story—of how Renfro had been kidnaped, of how they were keeping it a secret and of how they hoped in this way to get a quicker solution of the kidnaping mystery.

Jimmie, when he learned all the particulars, pushed Merle back out onto the street again. "How much did you hear?" he there demanded.

"Not enough to understand anything except that Renfro has been kidnaped, too, just like Helen Wier," Merle was inclined to be gloomy, "and they were both my friends."

"And we're not to tell a word we heard," Jimmie caught Merle's arm and shook him. "Do

you understand? Telling this would hurt Renfro. It would lessen their chances to find him. We've got to keep still and—"

"Help find him," Merle answered, the steel in his eyes shining so that Jimmie could see it as he never had before.

Jimmie Noel stopped. "Wait," he commanded, "Wait a minute. I have to think."

For fifteen minutes Merle waited. Then Jimmie drew him toward the corner. "Can you stay out very late?" he asked. "It may be all night. I have an idea. It may be nothing and again it may reveal to us where and how Renfro was kidnaped. Can you go out to 'Twin Cedar Cabin' with me? And stay all night?"

Merle nodded. "I'll call mother. If I tell her we're going out there to see Renfro, she'll be all right," he explained, "and that is what we are going to do if he's there—isn't it?"

"You bet!" Jimmie's spirits were soaring, "I'll telephone, too. And I'll tell Jack Burton we're going. I won't tell him about Renfro but I'll ask him to go along. He has some sense and he may help out some."

They separated and a little later they met,

having deemed it more safe to use different telephones. "Jack can't go," Jimmie explained. "His brother raised a row against him going and so he has to stay at home."

On the way out to the camp, Jimmie explained many things to Merle—of how when the cabin had been purchased and he had heard the story of the two chiefs who had fought for the hand of the pretty white girl, he and one of the young scout masters had decided to add to the lure of the place for all good scouts. They had gone out secretly and dug two graves, burying two old skeletons which had been in the trash room of the high school.

"It wasn't hard to believe those skeletons belonged to Indians," Jimmie laughed, "so we named the graves those of Wampum and Big Eagle."

And then he told about the odd lights which they had seen on the nights they had been there. "Now I was suspicious," he added, "and began to study ways those lights might have been made. And I just discovered the other day. Someone who wanted to keep anyone away from that cabin could have placed a number of batter-

ies there and then operate them from quite a distance. I believe that is just what someone is doing."

He drew a deep breath. "Every time any of the fellows go out to the cabin to stay all night they watch for the lights and they are not disappointed about seeing them either. So it stands to reason that they are being operated to keep scouts away from that cabin. Now, tonight we'll lay for those fellows. I have a hunch we'll find a fellow who is connected with Renfro's kidnaping."

Merle listened while Jimmie made his plans. They would go to the cabin, light the lamps, and build a roaring big fire in the fire place. Then Merle would stay in the cabin while he—Jimmie would go to the graves, hide near there and watch for some sign of life.

They reached the cabin safely. The lamps were lighted, the fire made, and then Jimmie slipped out of the cabin. A little later, Merle, following directions, extinguished the lamps and crept to the window.

He looked down toward the mounds. And soon his watch was rewarded. Violet and blue

lights alternately played over the graves. They left for a little while and then they came back. For about fifteen minutes they lingered this time and then they suddenly went dark again.

Merle waited. Minutes passed, and then longer minutes. But the lights did not come back. Nor did Jimmie. This was a hard wait for Merle. He began to wonder if anything could have happened to Jimmie. He had been told before Jimmie left not to dare leave the cabin but just stay there and watch. Something of unusual importance might happen right there.

And just as he was about to throw Jimmie's commands to the winds and leave the cabin to search for him, Jimmie appeared. He was a ruffled, muddy Jimmie. "Great Scott!" he ejaculated, "I was never so disgusted in my life. If I hadn't had that club in my hand and given them a dozen or more healthy raps I would feel like batting my head in the hope I could get some more brains into it."

He went to the fireplace and sat down. "It was just as I thought," he said. "Those lights came from electric batteries. Only they be-

longed to the high school boys who want this cabin. They tried to get it when the scouts got it but we had the most money. Jack Burton's brother led the gang. Whenever Jack would start out here they would come and operate their battery system. They thought they would scare us out pretty soon."

Merle was quite as disappointed as Jimmie. He came over and sat down beside him. "I ran into the whole nest of them," Jimmie continued, "and I knocked them right and left with my club. I think they thought I was a score of scouts for they ran—FROM ONE BOY," he laughed.

Merle laughed with him. "But that doesn't help us with Renfro," he began suddenly.

"No," Jimmie shook his head, "Poor old Hooch! Wouldn't he have liked to be in on this tonight?"

Later they snuggled up in their blankets and went to sleep. And when it was morning they soberly went back to town, both of them with one great determination and one secret in their minds. They were going to keep still about Renfro Horn's being gone and at the same time

they were going to help hunt him.

"Tonight, I'm going to walk over his route after I carry mine," Merle assured Jimmie, "and hunt out every suspicious looking person on it. Want to go along?"

"Yes, sir," Jimmie was emphatic.

"And keep still all day?"

"You bet!" Jimmie's lips went close together.

"Then tonight at six o'clock," Merle had the last word, "and meet me at Flaherty's butcher shop."

CHAPTER XXIII.

HELEN TALKS TO RENFRO.

RENFRO awoke early the next morning. The room of the cave in which he was confined was dark and the air seemed colder, more mouldy than on the night before. He wished that they had left the foul smelling lantern in his room, though the evening before he had hoped it would be removed.

His wrists and ankles felt numb. Last night they had ached for quite a long time. He decided while he lay alone in the dark that when Bart or Maggie came in he would ask them to ease the cords a bit. But when, after more than an hour, the old man, still wearing the low brimmed cap and surly air of the night before, came into the room Renfro decided not to even mention the tightness of the cords.

It was the same smoking, ill smelling lantern of the night before that he swung in his hand. He set it down near the bed, looked at Renfro, and then felt of the cord around his wrist. "Not so bad as that—not that bad, though it was a long time," he muttered to himeslf.

He rose heavily and fumbled his way through the door back into the other room. This time as he had done every time before he closed the door after him. "No use doing that," Renfro thought, "I've already heard Helen's voice."

The old woman came back with him. She carried a bowl of steaming stew in which onions were one of the principal ingredients. That was evident from the odor. And with it were several slices of toasted bread.

"Do you want some coffee?"

Renfro decided that her voice was not gruff through a habitual bad disposition but exposure and poor food and it might have been suffering. He forced a smile when he assured her that he would rather have some milk if she could give him some."

"After a while," she promised, "presently when I go up to the grocery."

When it was evident that he was going to eat the stew, the old man helped him raise himself to a sitting posture. Then he cut the cords on his wrists. "Now eat," he said and spoke without any surliness. "And when the door is fixed a little more you won't be tied any more."

A grim smile came onto his face. "You are too smart a boy to have loose for a time," he said.

Renfro was interested in the way he spoke. At least it was evident from what he said that he was to be kept in captivity quite a time. While he ate the stew which was not a disagreeable mess, he wondered what sort of confusion was raging back in Lindendale. Would the detectives decide that it was a kidnaping plot? Would they set out on another trip to a far off city for more evidence?

He was sure they would not do that. There was Mary, who had shared with him conjectures concerning the identity of the owner of the missing eyebrows. She would tell them about the trips to Captain Pete's, to the big house, and from there he was sure it would be easy for detectives to work their way to the old barn.

He smiled contentedly and ate on until the bowl was almost empty. If he had known that Mary thought him safe at the home of one of his friends, that his mother believed the same, that full charge of the secret investigation had

been given over to the detectives he would have been discouraged to the despair point.

After he was through eating, old Bart fastened new bandages, much wider but stronger than the others on his wrists. But they were a distinct advantage, for they did not hurt half as badly as had the others. And when he had changed the narrow ones around his ankles to the wide variety, Renfro, though far from being in a pleasant posture, was not uncomfortable.

As soon as they made the discovery that he was going to be agreeable and not cry or abuse them over his imprisonment, the old couple be came much less hostile. Renfro knew from their attitude that they did not want to hurt or punish him—but merely to keep him shut up until they had made some plans concerning Helen Wier.

"Well if it's money they're after, they'll sure ask dad for some too, as soon as they discover who I am," he began to think and then remembering Mary, decided that they wouldn't get far with their plans before they were discovered.

After promising to bring him something to

read the old man took up the dilapidated lantern and followed his wife, who had gone back into the other room several minutes before. Renfro heard him lock the door between the two rooms of the cave; and later gave some commands to his wife and Lang Tammy, who was once more in the cave.

Though the lantern was gone the cave was not so dark as it had been. Renfro moved until he discovered the source of the light. It came from over the top of an old door—the one, he felt sure—that the old man had spoken about nailing more firmly before he should be turned loose.

He twisted at his thongs. They were tied too tight to ever be torn loose. He tried them with his teeth but they were too tough for him to make more than an impression on them. And making impressions would only harm him, for once discovered they would be responsible for closer watch than ever being put over him.

Quietly he lay back on his pallet and waited. In the other room they were talking in muffled tones. A long conversation followed, a bustling noise, and then silence.

And finally out of it came a voice which Renfro knew. "Who is in there?" it demanded. "Is it any one who knows me? I'm Helen Wier."

Renfro could have shouted for joy. "I'm Renfro Horn," he answered. "Where are they gone?"

"Up town," Helen was just outside the locked door. "I'm not tied like they say you are, but I'm locked in. Tell me everything you know—about mother and father and everything. And why don't they find me?"

Renfro had to pitch his voice loud and make it peculiarly piercing to reach her through the heavy door and the big room of the cave. He told her of everything he knew, how her letters had reassured her mother and kept her well.

"Yes, they let me write them," Helen's voice seemed changed, more piercing, more strident. Renfro decided that it was from her life in the cave. "They're not mean to me—and they don't want money. They're keeping me, to get even with father."

Quietly and without any emotion she told her story. Bart had been sentenced to fifteen

years in the penitentiary by her father years ago. He had served most of those fifteen long years which had meant separation from his family. While there he brooded over the loneliness of himself and became almost a maniac, with one purpose in mind—namely to get even with the judge who had sentenced him.

At first he had decided to kidnap the judge himself. He had kept that thought in mind for years. When his old cellmate had gone free one day and they had given him another he had been given a chance to plan for the future, Captain Pete's brother had been put in his cell and he, in time, told of his home, of his crime, and the hidden cave in which he and his confederates had at first made the counterfeit money.

Getting bolder the counterfeiters had moved into the cellar of the big house and been discovered. But only the part of the story which was concerned with the cave had interested Bart. From that time on he made his plans. As soon as he was free he would come back to Lindendale, kidnap Judge Wier and imprison him for months in this hidden cave. Separation from his family for that time would give him just

a hint of what Bart had served on account of his sentence.

"Maggie told me all this," Helen put her lips close to the key hole for her throat was getting tired through talking so loud. "She wants me to know all of it so that when they let me back to father I can tell him all of it and understand exactly how and why Bart got been given a chance to plan for the future. Cap- even with him."

"But isn't Captain Pete in it?" Renfro persisted in asking a question though Helen was still talking.

"No, neither he nor his brother. They just happened to discover the cave and then they knew where I had been hidden. They're afraid of Bart. They won't ever tell until I'm safe back home and Bart and Maggie are away and safe in another part of the country, and happy because they've had revenge."

She talked a little while longer about the life in the cave. She and Renfro conjectured together on the probable time they would be imprisoned. And Renfro didn't tell her of Mary Dugan's knowledge of all his clues and his

hope of rescue from her. A surprise he decided would be a good thing for Helen Wier.

After a time they, following Helen's fear that the old woman would return, lapsed into silence. Renfro sat and studied the door around which came in small shafts of light. Now if he could only manage to get loose before that door was made more secure he felt that he could work his way through the door. But if—

And in the other room there came confusing sounds. Bart and Maggie had returned, and a scuffling and barking and cavorting around told him that they had brought with them Lang Tammy.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LANG TAMMY HELPS RENFRO ESCAPE.

OLD Bart, true to his promise, brought Renfro a book and the lantern to furnish him light for the reading. Maggie, also considerate, had polished the lantern shade, until now it gave a light which made the cave a definite room and was bright enough that Renfro could easily read.

But first he looked around the room. The stalactites, which had been specters in the half darkness, became things of beauty in the bright light. Renfro had heard that there were limestone deposits in the ground under the Hall farm. Now he was sure of it. Why this cave was very beautiful and full of promise.

"If old Jake—" Helen had told him the name of Captain Pete's brother—"had only known it," he thought, "there was a wealth on his own land much larger than any he could counterfeit during a lifetime."

Bart was examining the lock on the door. He had brought in with him a package which when opened revealed another lock that he tried to

adjust. But it was soon evident from his swearing that the new one was too small for the door.

Carefully the old man wrapped it up. Angry over his failure he turned upon Renfro. "You needn't be grinding," he said, "I'll get a better one this afternoon."

By slipping over on his stomach and with his hands under him Renfro could manage to read out of the book of pioneer stories Bart had fetched from the Hall library. He turned the pages with his tongue. But between pages he thought hard. If he could get loose by hook or crook he could get that old door open he was sure.

He remembered the story he had read in the detective magazine of a very wiry man who had managed to use a knife with his teeth. In Renfro's pocket had been a sharp knife. Bart had taken it out. Had he carried it away or left it with the other things on the floor?

"While he's gone this afternoon I'll roll over there and see," Renfro made his plans definitely.

A little later Maggie brought him his dinner, milk and other things she had considered deli-

cacies which a boy of Renfro's breeding was sure to like. She was unusually kind and Renfro felt sorry that she should be so deluded as she was.

He was so restless that he could hardly wait until Bart should start away again and he could roll over after the knife. That would take time and he must be free from the fear of discovery. He breathed a sigh of relief when he heard Bart begin to make preparations to leave. He heard Maggie argue with him about some things she wanted from her little home, back in town.

Bart refused to go after them, telling her that if she wanted them badly enough she would go herself. And after a little while she decided to go along. Better and better Renfro decided. Now he could do his work with alacrity, perfectly safe from any fear of discovery at all.

Bart came in after the lantern, carried it out, refilled it and brought it back. This time he left the door slightly ajar and while he was at work Renfro saw a big form slip in, crawl into the fartherest corner and lay there. It was Lang Tammy and he was hiding because of the whipping Maggie had given him for tearing

the binding on her coat.

Not until they were gone did Renfro call Lang Tammy and then he came, crawling and pleading exactly like a dog which has recently been beaten. But as he reached Renfro and made sure that it was his friend he became joyous and barked joyfully and frantically. And then he made ready for a game of tug.

Joyously he seized one end of the free bandage on Renfro's hands. He gave it a pull which cut into the boy's wrists cruelly. Another pull, another cut, and Renfro tried to stop him. But the big dog was intent on the game which was now a winning one for him. Another tug, this time a long tearing one, and something slipped, the knot the old man had tied so firmly that morning. Renfro jerked at his hands and Tammy was onto the bandage again.

And then it came loose. Renfro could have hurrahed from joy. Instead he rolled over quickly to his pile of articles taken from his pocket, found his knife, cut the thongs around his legs and stood tottering, his legs stiff and aching. With a bound he was to the door working at the lock. Indeed it was old and rusty.

It gave way before his onslaught and he stood free to go out into the open.

He flew back to the other door. "Helen," he called softly, "I'm free and you'll be in a little while. If they come back before help comes, be sick or do anything you can to keep them interested and away from my door.

Outside he stood in a new world which he soon identified as being the thicket below the hill on the Hall farm. He found the lower road and fairly flew to the edge of town, boarded a waiting car and rode directly to the office of the Globe.

The big building looked like paradise to him. Straight through the outer door, into the hall and back to the door marked "Route Manager, Morrison," he hurried. And inside it he fell into Morrison's arms.

"That wasn't a complaint, Morrison!" he burst out. "That was a fake call! I went—"

"You—Hooch, you—you!" Morrison gasped like a drowning man, seized Renfro, and half carried, half dragged him into Circulation Manager Bruce's office. The office was deserted except for that worthy and his stenographer.

He looked up at the confusion, jumped to his feet and caught Renfro in the curve of his arm.

And to him Renfro began his story once more. "That wasn't a complaint call last night at all. It was just a fake. I was kidnaped. It was a cave. And I found Helen Wier and—and"

"You found Helen Wier?" Bruce shouted his question. Then before it could be answered he had dragged him to the door. And there he decided that the boy was not going fast enough. Up into his arms he lifted him. Through the hall to the elevator cage he went, Morrison following.

"Car up!" Bruce was still shouting. "Can't wait."

Up the steps he ran. At the landing he ducked but Renfro's head struck the ceiling a hard whack, in spite of that, Renfro merely winced. At the top of the steps Bruce made a sharp turn, rushed against the door marked "Managing Editor" and threw it open with the weight of his big body.

Morrison, puffing and trying to obtain answers to a whole chain of questions he was hurling at Renfro, still perched perilously near

the top of Bruce's shoulders, followed. He saw Bruce drop Renfro, grab a little man who was having a discussion with Mr. North, The Globe's managing editor, pull him to the door, shove him through and then lock the door after him.

"What in the—" North jumped to the floor, scattering proof sheets in all directions. "What—"

The little man who had been forcibly ejected was beating and pounding his protest on the panels of the big oak door but Bruce didn't mind him. "North," he jerked North so that he faced Renfro, "This is Renfro Horn."

"And" Morrison would not be ignored, "he has found Helen Wier."

"When—where—how?" North was all editor.

"In a cave! I was there too. They kidnaped me last night," Renfro burst out. "She's there now! Locked in! Bart and Maggie are up town. Let's get her before they come back."

North pushed Morrison toward the door. "Get a taxi," he ordered," and keep your mouth shut."

He jerked open his desk, took his revolver

from a drawer and thrust it in his pocket. Five steps carried him to the locked door. He jerked it open, breaking the lock. "Warriner," he called. "We're making a trip. Big story! Extra edition! Get the presses ready for it. I'll take Figg with me."

The man sitting at the table on the front of which was printed "City Editor," jumped to his feet. "Figg!" he bawled, "Figg!"

While they waited North demanded Warriner's revolver and handed it to Bruce. "You're going too," he said.

Figg came out of the cubby hole which bore the name Sporting Editor—big, burly and aggressive in every step and gesture. No one ever mentioned a gun to Figg. With the first word of "Big story," he had his gun out of his desk and in his pocket.

No one mentioned elevator this time. They made their descent down the steps. Through the hall, a curious crowd stopping at sight of the odd procession, they rushed. Morrison outside had the taxi door open and into it they sprang, Bruce, North, Figg and Renfro. Morrison thinking that he was to be left behind

clung to the running board.

Renfro's directions were shouted to the driver by North. Out of town, breaking all traffic rules they went. A sharp turn by the tile factory took them down the river road. Beyond it they rode a few yards, made another turn, jolted up a deserted lane and came to an abrupt stop.

Around the shrubbery to the passage to the open door Renfro led them. Inside the room Lang Tammy sat in a dejected attitude. Bristling every hair he jumped at the intruders, saw Renfro and sprang on him with a joyful bark.

But a girlish voice sounded above all the confusion. "Renfro, have them hurry! It's time for Maggie and Bart any minute."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GLOBE GETS A SCOOP.

NOT until the taxicab turned into Elm Street back in town once more did Helen Wier speak. She simply crouched in one corner of the taxicab and stared out of the window. There she clutched at Figg's arm. "That's my street," she pointed at the one they left. "I have to see my mother right away. I do," she was emphatic, jerking his arm savagely, "I do!"

Then North became the cunning editor. "Not immediately," he spoke in conciliatory tones. "The shock would kill her. She had to be prepared. We'll attend to that at the Globe office."

Renfro stared at Helen. How white and thin she looked! Her voice had sounded hollow back there in the cave. Now as he afterwards described it, she looked hollow, too. Leaning against his knees, Lang Tammy was staring up at him with happy eyes. From time to time he kissed his hand and gave Figg hostile growls.

Everything at the Globe was waiting for them. Outside a long line of newsboys was wait-

ing for the extras to be shot through the presses and out to them on the street in a few minutes.

A crowd of girls from the business office stared through the windows at the motley procession. The elevator man, watching outside his cage, rushed in again and seized the lever. They shot up to the editorial floor and rushed into the room where Warriner had his star writer at his machine and his copy boys ready.

He looked at the crowd. "Shoot!" he commanded. "The girl first."

And Helen Wier encouraged by North told her story in weary, strained gasps. "I was in the library alone reading that night. I heard a noise. There was somebody in the room. He had a gun pointed at me. He said he would kill me if I screamed. He said there was some one in the other room who would kill my mother if I didn't come with him. His forehead was bleeding. Something was wrong with his eyebrows—"

"Oh, yes," Renfro jumped forward and jerking off his cap, turned down the band of his cap. "His eyebrows were missing. They froze to the window pane. He jerked them off and

I found them on the pane. That's how I found Helen."

North jerked him over to one side. "Your time next," he commanded, and nodded at Helen.

"Outside the house, he made me walk into the shrubbery. I was afraid they would shoot my mother." Helen's tone was full of worry. "They didn't—did they?"

"No, no, she's safe," North clipped out his words.

The typewriter stopped its clicking. The feature writer rolled out one sheet, Warriner grabbed it and another one was in its place.

"Shoot!"

Warriner gave the command again. "They gagged me then. A woman helped him. She was Maggie. And they put me in a wagon. We rode miles. It was cold and I didn't have any coat—just an old rug they put around me. We went through some buildings. And then down into the cave."

It was Renfro whom North asked to give a description of Bart and Maggie. He told his own story first—of the first night he had seen

the stranger peering into the Wier home, the second experience, his attempt to telephone the Judge, of the line out of order, and then of his finding the eyebrows frozen to the window pane.

The reporters moved closer to him while he talked. North interrupted to ask questions. Warriner gave orders to copy boys, to the writers at their machines, through a telephone to the press room through it all managed to hear every word of the story.

When Renfro at the close of his story again took off his cap, pulled down the band and exhibited his specimens—The Missing Eyebrows —carefully opened one of the square packages and took one look, held it to North, and then handed it to one of the men. "Have them photographed and a plate made," he ordered.

And then he was down to the press room. North once more took command—got more detailed stories from both Renfro and Helen, had half a dozen reporters writing at once—descriptions of the cave, of the rooms there, of Maggie and Bart and then one of Lang Tammy who was still by Renfro's side, his nose firmly

clutched by one of the boy's muscular hands.

There was a shout below. Morrison and Bruce both jumped. "The paper's off the press" the reporter nearest the chute yelled and North turned to Helen, "get ready to go home," he said kindly, "I'll telephone your mother."

"Telephone mine," for the first time Renfro remembered his parents. "I can't get home and back before it's time to carry my route."

North motioned to the cub reporter. "Tell Bruce to send some other boy out on Horn's route tonight," he commanded. "I want to take Horn home myself."

The trip down the stairway was made more slowly this time. North noticed that Renfro was limping. He reached out his hand and steadied him. "Best story of the year," he muttered. "And we scooped them all."

And Renfro understood him. But he didn't say anything except to nod at Lang Tammy. "I'm going to keep him," he said, "I wonder if they've got Bart and Maggie yet."

"Figg will tend to them," North smiled. "I sent him back with some of the boys to get the

story for the next edition."

At the door his editor's mantle seemed to drop. He looked first at Helen and then at Renfro. He had several children out at his home. "You're great kids!" he grinned.

But there was a volume in that grin and both of them realized it. In the taxi he was quite as laconic. "Your folks will about die! I talked to both of your dads."

Yet it was Helen's mother who was waiting on the porch when the taxi drove up in front of the Wier home. She rushed down the walk as Helen rushed toward the house. Half way they met.

North turned his head. But he heard Mrs. Wier talking. She had taken Renfro's hand. The tears from her eyes dropped on it but she talked bravely, and in a collected manner, giving him the greatest eulogy he had ever received.

The judge too talked to the boy, as one man does to another. Helen left her mother's arm to come over to him. "But you won't be hard on Bart, daddy," she begged. "You—see—now—we know—how—cruel—it—is to be away

from the people we love."

Judge Wier nodded his head. He looked up at North. "I will attend to them," he smiled, "but still I feel it would not be best to quote me on that. Just say that I shall not be too harsh on these people."

Mrs. Wier nodded. Then she looked at Renfro. "His mother is waiting," she said.

And North took Renfro back to the taxi in which Lang Tammy was waiting. As they crossed town, Renfro nodded toward the street. "This is my route," he said. "They call it Old Grief."

"The turkey route," North laughed. "We're going to use that story tomorrow in our Thanksgiving number."

He nodded at some of the dilapidated buildings on a cross street. "Want to change it?" he asked.

"No sir!" Renfro's answer was emphatic.

Mary Dugan was standing out close to the curbing, a clean white apron tied around her expansive waist. Her hand reached out and grasped Renfro's with all the force a man gives an obstinate pump handle. And she shook it

manfully.

Now, Mary Dugan was of the kissing type, but she respected manhood. And in fifteen minutes Renfro had grown from a boy to a man in her estimation. Nor did she weep though she had shed copious tears when she had heard the story. "I missed them eyebrows last night," she said "and I've dressed both of them turkeys which was left. The three charity ones I carried out to the preacher's parsonage myself. I told them to eat one themselves, as he did the free advertisin' for you."

Proudly she led the way to the house after she had delivered her speech. Renfro's mother caught him in her arms in the most genuine, motherly embrace he had known for a long time. She sobbed and sobbed and could not talk. But he knew without her saying a word how happy she was.

Mr. Horn laughed nervously to North. I've been through Hell a thousand times during the last twenty-four hours," he said. "But thank Heaven I had the courage to go through alone. I never told my wife a word about Renfro's being gone until you told me that he was safe.

She thought he was visiting."

He managed a few fatherly hugs in spite of his wife's constant clinging to Renfro. His eyes were charged with love and beyond that a look of pride. He started to say something directly to Renfro about his feelings but with a great effort Renfro managed to wriggle out of his mother's arm and start toward the dining room.

"Where are you going, Hooch?" Mary Dugan sprang to her feet with the suspicion in her mind that Renfro was hungry.

But Renfro waved her aside. "I'm going to call up the office," he returned. "I want to find out of Morrison if there have been any complaints on my route."

THE END.

The next RENFRO HORN book will be

THE LUCK OF THE RAINY NIGHT

THE LUCK OF A RAINY NIGHT

or

Renfro Horn Wins the $10,000 Reward

In this second book of the Renfro Horn series of Newspaper Boys' stories, Renfro Horn wins the enmity of the carrier on Route No. 19, because Renfro is held up as a model carrier by the Circulation management of the Globe.

And on the darkest, rainiest night of the year, the carrier of Route No. 19 plans to lure Renfro to a desolate place where he hopes to give him a beating. But Renfro, who has been keen on the trail of the Insurance Mystery, stumbles on the body of the man who is supposed to be dead, and he wins the reward which the Insurance company has offered for the location of Clyde Truesdale.

THE RISE OF ROUTE 19

or

Renfro Gets a Regular Detective Badge

"Old Grief" has now been made a respectable route under Renfro Horn's careful carrier service, and the Globe has the largest number of subscribers in that section of the city, so to test Renfro Horn's fighting spirit, Bruce, the circulation manager, offers Renfro Route 19, one of the bad routes along the river front, where the house boats are moored, and a better route in a better part of the city.

But Renfro Horn, being in quest of success and excitement takes Route 19 and thus begins an interesting series of adventures for this boy carrier, who is the peer of the city's best detectives. It ends with the Mayor of the city pinning on his coat lapel a regular detective badge, because Renfro has found the stolen finger prints.

THE WHITE BAG'S SECRET

or

Renfro Horn Trails Down the Thieving Dog.

By Stephen Rudd.

The jewels of Mrs. Laidlaw Garth have mysteriously disappeared. Mary Dugan's Cousin, Bridget O'Hara, is the maid in the house and is under suspicion.

Renfro and Mary believe she is innocent. Through the location of one of his old paper bags, Renfro gets a clue which leads him to believe that Mrs. Garth's dog, "Bluff," stole the jewels. He and Mary set out to find them, and they are successful, of course.

But there is thrill in this story for any red blooded boy.

Published by the R. H. Gore Publishing Co.

THE CLUE OF THE TWISTED PAPER.

or

The Mystery of the Lost Girl.

By Stephen Rudd.

Can a paper, which a newspaper carrier boy twists into a roll and throws on a porch, contain a clue to the identity of the girl who has forgotten who she is or where she comes from. Renfro Horn, the carrier boy Detective, proves this can be done.

He and Mary Dugan do it.

And the lost girl—well she is a wonder child. But read all about this absorbing mystery in "The Clue of the Twisted Paper." It's coming soon.

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